

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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NEVER FORGOTTEN.

PART THE SECOND.

CHAPTER XXII. FOREBODINGS.

MISS MANUEL had returned. She had been at Torquay, or at St. Leonard's, or at some of those sheltered winter corners where invalids go to find colour and strength. This her world supposed; her court of writers and "clergymanical" reviewers, all knew this; and when they made their congratulations on her return, never suspected that her fresh brilliancy was owing to the keen breezes of the little dun town so far away. She returned with all the enthusiasm of triumph.

Almost on the day of her arrival she met Major Carter. He had heard of her visit. He had fallen in with Fermor, who, in a pettish way, had told of her sudden departure. "She is gone, God knows where, and has told nobody." Which speech disturbed the major not a little. Now, as she passed him to enter a shop, there was a look of insolent victory in her face, which made him yet more uneasy, and sent him home thoughtful. If he had only watched her carefully for the rest of the day, he would not have slept that night.

For early that morning Mr. Speedy had received a fairy-looking note at his Irrefragable office, and was almost intoxicated at finding in it a request that he would, after office hours, wait on Miss Manuel at her house. From that day he became generally superior to homely Mrs. Speedy. The note was long preserved in the Speedy archives, and it lay for many a day on the top of the other notes in the little basket. Major Carter was not passing, or he would have seen Mr. Speedy with a new pair of gloves going in, and Major Carter was not Asmodeus Carter, or he would have frantically torn away the front of *that* house, of all houses in London, to see and hear Miss Manuel and the man of business sitting close, and talking with extraordinary eagerness. Major Carter did not watch the terminus at Euston-square for the night-train to start, or he would have seen a muffled Mr. Speedy drive up and take a ticket for Bangor, on "special mission," as it was said at the office, where he was missed next day. On this "special mission," sent by order of the directors, he was away more than a week. Thus over the head of

unsuspecting Major Carter was already hanging a spectral sword of Damocles, and as it swung and shook, he felt himself brought within its cold shadow, and shivered; but the world was going so pleasantly with him, that he shook off all disagreeable thoughts for the present.

Mrs. Fermor, full of enthusiasm and young affection, had soon shut out the memory of what she had heard during her night-watch, and came eagerly to welcome her friend back again. She had worked herself into a sort of romantic love for this friend; and though she felt again, when ascending the stairs, something of her old recollections, when she entered and saw Miss Manuel sitting nearly as "bright" as ever, she forgot it, and ran forward to embrace her with real affection.

"I am so glad, so delighted, to see you down again," she said, with a sort of punctuation, as it were, of kissing.

Pauline tried to be cold, but her resolution gave way before the genuine delight of this faithful little woman. Then she turned from her suddenly and sharply, and she called herself (mentally) "She-Judas!"

"I am so glad!" said Mrs. Fermor. "I never discovered until you were ill how much I liked you. I don't know why; we have known each other for so short a time; and I dare say," she added, a little ruefully, for she again thought of what she had heard during the night-watching, "you do not care so much for me?" And she looked at her wistfully.

"Why should you think that?" said Pauline. "You know I like you, and *indeed* I feel grateful for all you have done for me. I only learnt to-day how you nursed and watched me. And it has distressed me more than you would suppose. I wanted nobody," and she added, a little vehemently, "and you—not for the world. You might have caught it. But I am indeed grateful." And again she turned sharply, and called herself Judas. "I never thank," she went on earnestly. "They tell me I am cold, and do not feel obligations. So that you will understand, if I should ever appear not to value what you have done as it deserves to be valued, you will set it down to the right cause. Don't judge me too harshly; there may be more behind than you know of. We may not all have our free will."

Deeply mystified at the beseeching manner with which this was said, Mrs. Fermor knew not

what to make of it. "I don't know," she said, "but I am sure you will be always kind and good." She added, piteously, "I seem to have no friends now. I have so few to care for me, and those few—" She stopped.

"But your husband," said Miss Manuel, "is not he all in all, as they put it?"

The little lady's little brow contracted. Her eyes fell towards the ground. "I dare say it is my fault," she said. "It may be. I am very young and foolish. Perhaps if I had some one to advise and counsel me, some kind person that understands me, or would try and understand me. I thought of this very often during the nights that I was with you. From the very first day I was attracted to you—I felt that you would aid and assist me in some difficulty. And now I am sure, if I were to put confidence in you and tell you my little troubles, you, who I *think* are beginning to like me—you who are so good and noble—"

Miss Manuel, who had been listening with her eyes fixed on the other, turned hastily and rose. "No, no," she said, "not to me. To any one in the world but me. I am not fit to advise any one. Good and noble! No, no. Wicked, rather. I have no will, no strength. I am a weak, miserable being. Leave me, leave me quick. I am ill still, I believe, and talk absurdly. Leave me now. I shall be better to-morrow."

Mrs. Fermor departed, sad and wondering. When she was gone, Pauline fell upon and buried her face in the cushions of a sofa, sobbing wildly. "Good God! good God! what am I coming to? What devilish task is this I have plunged into? Destroying the innocent, poisoning the pure! No, no—save me, save me; and spare that poor, gentle, tender, confiding thing!"

She felt a hand upon her shoulder, and she started up. "Whom would you spare?" said her brother, scornfully; "that girl who has just left you? Never, by my soul! never! not while I live! If your hand fails, then is mine ready—far rougher, and far more deadly. So choose. I am growing impatient. It is too long. Ah, Pauline! you treat an oath lightly, it seems. Your memory is growing weak. To me it seems but last night, and that our darling Violet is lying in the next room. Come, take a serious warning, or, as sure as I live, I go out into the open roads and make shorter work of it. I shall, surely as I live!" He then looked round and round the room with a suspicious glare, as if some one was concealed. "How can you want me to tell you of these things? I want no promptings. My heart carries me on only too fast. You are forgetting, and will soon have forgotten. I never can forget. I saw her last night—" He stopped, looking round wildly.

She was frightened, and soothed him. "Now, Louis," she said, "depend on me. Leave all to me. *Indeed* I have not forgotten, and never, never shall." Those words of his often repeated themselves; but latterly she had noticed they grew more intense, and lasted longer.

"No," she said, "I must go on. He is right. The guilty still flourish, and shall be overtaken."

CHAPTER XXIII. LADY LAURA STILL WORKING.

The glowing cheek and rich red lip, for which Mrs. Fermor was noted, were paling off into lighter tones. A wrung and wistful look was in her bright eyes. In her little soul, a stiff strong stubborn pride was working. It had worked its way, like a strong current through the earth of an embankment; and the "breach," as it would be called, between her and her "lord," was widening with every fresh day.

She went out a good deal into "society," where, like many wandering married ladies, whose lords do not choose to wander with them, she found plenty of pleasant friends and strangers to chatter with, and even—to use the good-natured word which conveniently cloaks up so many derelictions—even to "flirt" with. Had a friendly lady on an ottoman close by introduced that word to her, she would have coloured up, and gathered in the folds of her dress with noisy rustle, and indignantly played the respectable young woman outraged. With *her* it was all homage, and *intellectual* talk with *clever* men—the old moral spring-guns and "gins" of fatal power and mischief. Mrs. Fermor, therefore, was seen at many parties, and the observant remarked that "that Mr. Romaine" was at nearly all the houses where Mrs. Fermor was seen.

There was an intimate air in his manner, the observant observed, which she herself was conscious of, and struggled against. He had the look of coming with her there, and of taking her away, though in effect he did neither. He saw her down to halls, and there imperiously took her cloak from another holding it for her to put on. And though he did not go near her much in rooms, she had a feeling that she was always under his eyes. She began to feel, indeed, that this must not go further, and had determined that, as soon as the holy work in his regard she had put her hand to was satisfactorily accomplished, it *should* cease. Poor quick vivacious little soul! impetuous, aggrieved, with a sore heart under her tulle, she was kept up by her pride. That "holy work" she had undertaken was pretty near to being accomplished. It was said that Mrs. Massinger's marriage had made no such brilliant impression as was reckoned on (one of her professional critics said she was "curdy"), and the town resented it as if it were her fault. The noble earl who looked to those matters, and "rated" *belles* as seamen are rated, before and after the mast, had smiled contemptuously as he looked down on her through his gold "pinchnose," as the French call it. "Blancmange, my good Fitzroy," he said, shutting up his "pinchnose." "Blancmange, and no more. There are people, of course, who *like* blancmange."

The neophyte was behaving valiantly. It did seem as though he would be firm in his faith. But already the Fiery Cross of Scandal had been

softly passed round by the full fat fingers of dowagers, and the irrevocable "coupling" of her name with that of Mr. Romaine had taken place. Poor foolish, little, innocent, helpless married woman! The turbaned vultures were already fluttering heavily in the air overhead.

Fermor, the "fallen-short man," *homme manqué*, was still wrapped in his moodiness as in a cloak. There was bitterness in everything he chewed. Presently, a good-natured elderly man, with grey whiskers and a gold double eye-glass, with a ribbon and *square* glasses, came up to him confidentially one evening, and laying the gold glasses on Fermor's shirt, said: "My dear fellow, I know you are a man of sense, and will not take ill what is said by a man old enough to be your father—but—er—I want to speak—about" (cough) "Mrs.—er—Fermor."

Fermor looked at him sharply, and grew hot. "What would you say about Mrs. Fermor?"

"Well," said the other, "it is merely as a friend, you know, and——"

"O, of course," said the other, bitterly; "it is always friends who bring us good news. Well?"

"You see, the world," said the other, stretching out his glass in the direction of the world, but being brought up suddenly by the shortness of the ribbon, "You see, the world, my dear fellow, is censorious, and I *do* think, if you went a little more out with Mrs. Fermor, especially to those parties which that half-savage fellow Romaine frequents——"

This came as news indeed for Fermor. "This, then, is the game?" he thought. "I am to be ridiculous through town; the mari complaisant; the easy-tempered jackass. Let her treat me as she pleases at home, but I will not be pointed at."

To the next party, Captain Fermor announced sullenly that he was going. "With all my heart," said Mrs. Fermor, gaily. "I hope you will go to others too."

Fermor laughed scornfully. "We shall see."

Lady Laura was still fighting the fashionable "good fight." She was labouring on with her old constancy, and seemed to have gained fresh spirit, though not fresh strength. The face was growing yet longer; the worn cheeks yet more worn; but the eye had the old keen wary ken, and swept the line of men with the nicest appreciation, like a general's. Yet there were many things to damp and discourage her.

Though successful with Alicia Mary, whom, with infinite pains and struggling, she had made Mrs. Onslow Piper, still that alliance had brought with it serious charges, and some terrible expenses. Trousseau and breakfast were the least of these; but at the last moment young Piper, with an aggrieved manner, as though he were making this proposal a *test* for whether he had been "taken in" or no, "struck," and bluntly and suspiciously said it was due to his self-respect to "get something;" that his friends said it was "a shame." And though the poor lady-captain did what she could, the odds were too

great, and she had to wring out of her own allowance something that would satisfy the greedy youth. There was the London house too, and the London carriage, and London riding horses on job, and the London milliner, Madame Adelaide: but months ago the job-master had talked to Lady Laura in her own hall as if she had been one of his stable-boys; and Madame Adelaide, once sweet and full of lively compliments, was now showing her teeth, and snarling about "her attorney." Yet she fought on, laboured on, for there was hope. Blanche, younger and fresher than Alicia Mary, had somehow been attracting that young Lord Spendlesham, just burst from his guardians, and who, in truth, fancied Blanche. Actually "the thing" was making progress, and Blanche, wearing always a look of devout adoration, and following the noble youth with steady eyes wherever he moved, conveyed the idea of a hopeless idolatry not unpleasing. Lady Laura had friends—good faithful contemporaries—who gave the boy a smile of encouragement, and remarked to him the "fine girl there" who never took her eyes off him.

Young Spendlesham—unconsciously selfish—threw out carelessly many whims and wishes, which were gratified at great cost to the family. He was passionately fond of dancing, and when there was a gap in his programme, outside he would say to Blanche, "Get Lady Lau to give a dance. I dote on dancing." And Lady Lau bowed her head with Spartan courage, and was abroad for one half the day in a cab, and for the other half in her room doing common millinery-work with desperate but skilful fingers, striving hard to avoid drifting away on the rocks of Madame Adelaide. Whence she wrung out money for these works, and how she faced the rude job-master and the insolent French woman, and with dignity made them (for the time) ashamed, and how she screwed a little delay out of both job-master and milliner, were things to be admired and compassionated. "If I had only time to breathe," she thought often, "and a little space in front clear! But they come on me all together, and from all sides."

"Ask the Fermors," she said to her daughter. "I hate having aggrieved relations going about."

And this was the party to which Fermor had said so sullenly that he would go.

CHAPTER XXIV. A CLOUD NO BIGGER THAN A HAND.

WHILE Miss Manuel was away, the town had something to talk of. It was soon pretty well known and pretty well talked about, how "that sucking young Spendlesham" was about to make "a greater fool of himself" than ever. His own contemporaries told him, in their friendly way, not to be an ass, and seriously wondered among themselves what he could see in so plain a virgin, who was almost old enough to be his mother. But among the long tribe of dowagers the attempt was most deeply resented. Had they got her among them in some private place,

they would surely have sacrificed her. The fury of this elderly populace knew no bounds, and they almost thirsted for her blood.

It was wonderful indeed. Alicia Mary had been difficult to "placer;" but her incomparable mother had brought her in a winner, as the skilful jockey does the indifferent horse, simply by splendid riding. But what was difficult with Alicia Mary seemed almost impossible with Blanche, who was raw, helpless, and without any fertility of resource. "Splendid riding" was here profitless; but Fortune took pity on this gallant Lady Laura, and, by some combination of accidents, fascinated the young Spendlesham with the charms of Blanche. The "finest woman" he had ever known was a fresh barmaid at a fishing inn in the country, for whom he had had an agonising attachment. But the barmaid had long since married respectably—i.e. into an opulent butcher interest. The features of Blanche recalled the old romance, and the fresh barmaid seemed to live again in the person of Blanche.

But young Spendlesham was not yet *sui juris*. The law had furnished him with some odious janisaries called guardians, who were wary and watchful. One of these was happily an old admirer of Lady Laura's, Sir John Westende, of Westende House, who, as young Sir John, clapped and applauded when she, as young Lady Laura, was flying round in tulle and flowers on her bare-backed steed. These were the delightful days when we had "figure," and a "neck," and colour, and light in our eyes, and all the ambrosial charms of youth. Sir John, it was thought, was sure to "come forward;" but he was irresolute, and went back again timidly when he had advanced.

The young Sir John of those days had not the Westende property, which came in late. He had a modest but sufficient patrimony, and was deeply in love with Lady Laura. The latter, if ever she liked any man, might be said to have liked Sir John, and told him so. But sentiment, with her, could only be indulged in where it was to be had gratis; any laying out of money on it was out of the question. Young Sir John went away happy to travel for two months, and when he returned found that a personal friend had been invited to take his place; a personal friend, too, whose prospects were, if anything, only a shade better than his own. The skilful who managed her affairs thought they were bound to give her the benefit of ever so trifling an advantage; and, considering that the Westende property had not then come in (it eventually "came in" by an aunt), it was only natural that they should act as they did. The balance, which took the shape of sentiment, could not be reduced into moneys numbered; and was, of course, left out of the reckoning. Sir John was put back; the friend, who was shy and retiring, received notice that it was now *his* turn. This caused a breach. Young Sir John, after some excited expostulation, retired to Westende, while Lady Laura married Mr. Fermor.

On this step he was furious, got a severe ill-

ness, recovered, and went away to the Continent. By-and-by the aunt died, and the Westende property "came in" unexpectedly. The news gave a dreadful pang to Lady Laura; and later Sir John married handsomely. The lady he married was the well-known Miss Chedder, of the banker's family, with, as some of the elder ladies put it, "sixty thousand pounds to her back, my dear," but who had also sixty thousand tongues. She was a stalwart lady, and brought with her to the family the whole story of the Fermor affair, which she kept alive and fresh by constant daily allusion, rubbing salt into an old sore. For sixteen years Sir John led a miserable life, with the Lady Laura business flourished in his face, hurled at his back as he left the room, tumbled about his ears like broken crockery, dashed on his cheeks like hot scalding tea—until the famous Miss Chedder died, and left him a widower, with two good-looking daughters.

Young Sir John by-and-by thus became a fatherly Sir John, later on a middle-aged Sir John, and was now a fresh and elderly Sir John. But he had never forgiven the Fermors. He had now grey whiskers and a round clean face, with a light-blue tie and white waistcoat. For him was the handsome carriage with the bays seen waiting at the foot of the steps as the train halted at Westende; and to him porters and station-master at Westende obsequiously touched their caps. Then as the train passed over the viaduct, its passengers saw the bright carriage and brighter horses below, rolling along the winding road, dipping into the clumps of trees, and reappearing proudly in the sun, making the mile and a half or so of journey which lay between Westende House and the station.

Sir John's sister had married a brother of the late Lord Spendlesham, so that it was quite fitting that he should be appointed one of the guardians. Sir John himself having the two good-looking daughters, it was natural that he should begin to associate his ward and his daughters together, in a tranquil and prospective manner. He always indeed said that his ward was not worth his salt, and had no wit, and never would have any, and the sooner he made a fool of himself the better.

This at least was his tone until suddenly one day a co-guardian came down to the station and took the pleasant road that led to the park, specially to communicate the news that young Spendlesham had announced that he was going to marry on the very day he came of age. Sir John, who was in his garden with his blue tie on and a grey "wide-awake" hat, took this news savagely—his face grew pink with rage and excitement, and he threw down his stick upon the gravel walk. "It shan't be! By — it shan't be," he said; "curse their impudence." (Sir John swore on great occasions.) "What do they mean? They have done this on purpose. That woman has laid it all out; I know it."

For an hour he was in a fury, then ordered his carriage and drove into the country town six

miles off to see Padgett, the country attorney and coal agent. Having seen Padgett, he posted up to London and saw his ward. He came in on him very hot, and very incoherent. The boy wrapped an imaginary toga about him, and drew himself up to meet the storm. "I don't believe it," said Sir John, injudiciously, "not a word of it. They have been making a fool of you, sir. I wonder you have not more sense. You must be watched like a child in the nursery. Pack up your things, and come down with me to the country. I'll expose these people."

"Never!" said the young lord, still in his toga; "my word is pledged—the word of a peer."

"The word of a noodle," roared Sir John. "Don't spout in that fashion to me! Ah! I am ashamed of you. An old stale bit of crust like that—who has been kicking about the ball-rooms for years."

"It's a shame to speak of a lady in that way," said the youth. "She loves me. I shall be of age in a few months, and can do as I like."

With this tone in the discussion, of course no progress was made. Sir John went away foaming, and determined to "expose those people."

He was at a dinner-party that night, and, after the dinner-party, "went on" moodily to some "rout." There he saw Miss Manuel, who had always a regard for "oldish" men. She was always thus protesting against the cold and Pagan system of modern manners, which carries out the aged of the tribe and exposes them, as they get helpless, on mountains, with a pot of rice. She always fought the battle of the old, and said how grateful they were for any consideration, and so anxious to fit themselves to the times that had left them behind, if the world would only let them. This night she was flushed with victory, having just returned from her Welsh expedition.

Sir John told her his troubles, working himself into a perfect heat as he did so. "They are a mere set of adventurers these Fermors," he said, "that should be exposed. I don't see why I should be keeping them up. They have always treated me scurvily, from the father downwards. I was very near being taken in myself by that scheming woman. She did her best to catch me, but I had wit enough to escape her." (It was so long ago, Sir John might safely give out this new version.) "She was a fine woman then, and I had a raging schoolboy's fancy for her; and, ma'am, behaved nobly—nobly, as it seems to me now—when she found she could not get me, and took up with that stupid blundering Fermor. I could have broken the thing off in ten seconds; but I didn't. I said nothing; no, not a word, and they were married."

Sir John had worked himself into a perfect heat as he thought of his treatment.

Miss Manuel listened eagerly, and then said suddenly, "I never heard. Do tell me, Sir John."

But Sir John had repented on the spot. It was so long ago, he said; it was a mere story of the day, and he wasn't sure that it *was* a story at

all. "Look at their ingratitude," he went on, in a fresh burst; "that poor devil, Pocock, who has helped them through many a business, they will do nothing for him—nothing whatever."

"It is very hard," said Miss Manuel; "you know they are not friends of mine. It is no harm to say that we have cause to regret an acquaintance with *that* family. I am told it is not considered a very serious thing now, and that the young men of the day mean it for mere amusement. But still, I cannot bring myself to know Lady Laura, or to like her."

The allusion to Sir Hopkins made a deep impression on Miss Manuel. She almost despised that restless plotting spirit, and could scarcely bring herself to think him of sufficient dignity to be the object even of punishment. She had avoided him almost with contempt. Now she sought him. She was struck by the decay and blight that had settled on his face. "You have quite given me up, Sir Hopkins," she said to him. "There was a time when you used to come and see me, and talk about your travels, and the treatises, and wild natives. Come and see me to-morrow."

The old intriguer, whose diplomatic heart was made sick to death by hope deferred, and who had furrows of sickly fretfulness and anxiety marked on his cheeks, was glad to have an opportunity to air his grievances—and came.

His hair was scattered and thin. "It is the way of the world," he said, nervously (he was only now finding out that way of the world)—"always the way they use you when they don't want you." (But had it not been Sir Hopkins's own way to the world?) "I am sure a man who had composed those Waipiti troubles would have a claim. Why, old Lord Boldero said to me, only this day, 'No fellow like you, Pocock, for handling the natives!' His very words, Miss Manuel! And that young conceited Harding Hanaper, who can sit in an office easily enough, and give pert answers easily enough too, he tells me that he is afraid nothing can be done for me."

"But," said Miss Manuel, gently, "you should get your friends to work for you—the Fermors, for instance."

"The Fermors!" said Sir Hopkins; "I would die sooner than ask them for anything. You don't know all I have done for those people—the sacrifices, the trouble—and I have asked them to use some little interest (and they can work the Buryshaft influence well), and they refused. You don't know what obligations they are under to me."

"It is very hard," said Miss Manuel.

"Hard, it is monstrous!" he said, piteously. "They talk of being old! Look at Boldero, he is ten years older than I am, but they sent him out. Of course they did. He has married into the office, and they will do any job for him. But it is always the way—and the way of the world."

It was pitiable to hear this worldling so severe on the world he had loved and served. As Miss

Manuel looked at him, she wondered at the change that had come on him. He seemed to have grown old and almost drivelling. A year or two of chafing and importunity and anxiety had brought this all about. He was no longer the pleasant Sir Hopkins, who gave dinners and who ate them, and who went along the highways of life in listen shoes. No wonder the young flippant children of F. O. said he had quite "broken up." "I don't speak to the Fermors now," he went on. "All I asked her was to go to the old duke, who used to admire her so long ago. He couldn't refuse. I *know* he couldn't. There is a history about that. Then I said, a letter, a few lines. She wants to nurse her interest for her family. Carter, too, who did dirty work enough for the family—they have treated him just the same."

Miss Manuel's eyes flashed. "Dirty work, indeed," she said; "but he will find his account. As they all will."

Sir Hopkins looked a little confused. "I meant," he said, "that old business, long ago. As for Eastport, I give you my honour, Miss Manuel—"

"I have heard of that old affair," said she, eagerly; "but never the details."

"O, it's an old story," he said, "forgotten now. I mean *their* ingratitude; is it not bad?"

Said Miss Manuel, suddenly: "I have some little influence in the direction you speak of. An official friend told me lately that he could help a friend of mine, in a small way; that is, I could speak to him, you know."

"*Could* you! O, *could* you!" said Sir Hopkins, in the fervour of senile gratitude. "How kind, how good, how generous! O, Miss Manuel, I shall never forget it; never, never! Anything, you know, will do."

"It is difficult," she said; "but I can promise it to you. There was an island—Prince Somebody's, I think."

"Yes, yes. Lee Boo's. How did you know?" he said, in astonishment.

"I know many things," said Pauline; "more than ever a diplomatist would suppose; and I am curious to know more. I have a woman's taste for gossip, Sir Hopkins. Sit down there, and tell me your little bit of ugly family business—to amuse me."

Instantly he became the old sly-looking Sir Hopkins, and glanced at her sideways, as he would have done long ago at a Waipiti trying to take him in. "I am not to be entrapped or seduced," he seemed to say. What he did say was, "O, it is a stupid old story, Miss Manuel; would not interest you in the least. But," he added, nervously, "about Harding Hanaper. He has influence *there*, which he ought not to have, and a word from him—"

"And a word from me to him?" said Pauline. "No, I am afraid. You see, I must keep any little trifling influence I have for my own family, like Lady Laura, and for my slaves, who work for me and gratify my whims."

Sir Hopkins looked at her piteously. He understood perfectly. "I shouldn't have alluded to it; I was irritated, you *know*," he said, almost imploringly. "Family honour and chivalry. No, it would not be right, indeed."

Miss Manuel burst into a fit of laughter. "What heroics!" she said. "Who dreams of touching the family honour? Not I, indeed, I assure you. But I was only joking, Sir Hopkins. Poor me to have influence with Harding Hanaper, or with any one! They only laugh at us weak women." And she stood up. "I have heaps of letters to write. By the way, I have just written to Harding Hanaper." And she pointed to a note in the distance.

Miserable irresolution was in Sir Hopkins's anxious face. But he could not resist going out with pride and dignity. "You are very cruel to me, Miss Manuel," he said. "You bear malice, I see. Good-by."

Miss Manuel stood in the same attitude for many moments watching the door by which he had passed. "I hold him," she said triumphantly, "in the hollow of my hand. The wretched creature would sell his soul for office." She was turning to go to her desk, when the door was opened softly, the worn face was put in again, and Sir Hopkins said:

"If you are not busy now, Miss Manuel—"

"Busy," said she, "not at all! We can have an hour's comfortable chat, and tea—I know you like your afternoon cup of tea—and, shall I tell them to let in no one?"

Sir Hopkins looked over irresolutely in the direction of Mr. Harding Hanaper's note. It was not gone. He drew in his chair, laid his hat on the ground beside him, as he always did, and said, "Shall I tell you a story—?"

"I see I shall have to re-write my letter," said Miss Manuel, tearing up Mr. Hanaper's letter.

"So you see," said Sir Hopkins, with his old Waipiti smile, as he rose to go away, having quite talked himself into a fluent diplomatic vein, "So you see it is nothing but a bit of old family scandal. Such things gather at the skirts of every respectable house in the country. Where there are young men, there will always be a little folly of this kind. Miss Manuel, I believe Mr. Harding Hanaper is still in town, and—"

"And this is all?" said Miss Manuel, with her eye fixed coldly on him; "this is all?"

"This is all," Sir Hopkins said, going away.

"Very well," said she; "I shall go to my letters."

When he had gone, Miss Manuel said to herself, "He has not told a quarter of the truth! He thinks he can keep his wretched old hand in practice on *me*! If he chooses to play these tricks, he must pay the penalty. I gave him one chance, and he has thrown it away." She then sat down to her letters. She did not write to Harding Hanaper, but to her fresh elderly friend, Sir John, who admired her as "a fine woman."

"Dear Sir John,—As you mentioned that you were anxious about that foolish ward of yours, who is so determined to become a husband, I am Samaritan enough to let you know that I am likely enough to know something that may be useful. You seemed annoyed about the business, and I could not help taking this trouble to assist you. In the mean time, I would advise your not going to Lady Laura Fermor, as you seemed to think of doing, until we hear something more.

"PAULINE MANUEL."

Sir Hopkins, passing again, saw the messenger go with the notes in his hand. He chuckled and became two years younger on the spot. "I can manage the Waipiti yet, though they talk of superannuating me. You did not get much out of me, Miss Manuel, and I shall be 'His Excellency' very soon!"

MONASTIC MYSTERIES.

In the kingdom of Italy, convents have lately been suppressed by law. In other countries, they are encouraged; in some, simply tolerated—which is enough for *them*. Where they are allowed an inch, they try to take an ell. It is right, therefore, that the world should be reminded that modern monasteries—whatever they might have been in the good old times—are by no means the retreat of every virtue. Persons shut up in convents are at least useless to society. A recently published narrative,* cautious and reticent as it is respecting many particulars, proves that, while not a few are worse than useless, a vast multitude live on in extreme unhappiness, when they are not cut off in the flower of their age.

Enrichetta, granddaughter of Gennaro Caracciolo, Prince of Forino, was born at Naples, in the family palazzo, on the 17th of February, 1821, and was named after a nun, her paternal aunt, one of the innumerable victims whom her race had offered to the Order of St. Bennet. Through the capricious treatment of her father by the Bourbon government, her childhood was passed partly in straitened circumstances and partly in official splendour. At fourteen, a bright-complexioned, well-developed girl, she had the misfortune to fall deeply in love—if love can fairly be called a misfortune. She tells how well she loved, with womanly frankness. There was a long exchange of glances and salutations from a balcony, and, for months, nothing more. Carlo, the beloved object, took no steps to acquaint her parents with their mutual passion, but seemed rather to wish to conceal it. In short, poor Enrichetta's disillusion came only too quickly. Carlo married another girl, because her purse was heavier. First love thus prematurely fell to the ground—a flower blighted in the bud.

After a time, second love came with young Domenico, a visitor at the paternal mansion.

Enrichetta said to herself that all men might not be so base as Carlo. Domenico did love, firmly and fervently; and Enrichetta responded with equal earnestness. But neither in this case could the course of true love run smooth. Domenico's father had other "views;" moreover, her own father, ruled by his wife, would have nothing to say to Domenico as a son-in-law. And there threatened to come an end of that. This second disappointment brought on a severe nervous attack, to a recurrence of which the victim ever afterwards remained subject. But was this impassioned girl a fit subject to shut up in a nunnery?

Her father, a kind man, died; and, without either guardian or dowry, she was left at the mercy of, not an unjust mother-in-law, but, of what is more heartrending, an unjust mother, who, instead of concealing the preference she might feel for one child above another, openly carried out her likes and dislikes. Domenico still continued to hope. The mother brutally dismissed him, and arranged a match for her elder daughter, Guisepina. Enrichetta's godmother was abbess of the convent of San Gregorio Armeno.

One morning, her mother went out unaccompanied, professing urgent business; but soon returned, more cheerful than usual, as if the affair had turned out satisfactorily. A few days afterwards, the abbess's servant delivered to Enrichetta a box of bonbons, with the news that the chapter had unanimously voted her admission into the convent. It sounded in her ears like a sentence of death; the very word "convent" was detestable. She pleaded, with tears, to be left at liberty. Her mother was inexorable. She entered within the hated walls, on the promise of being taken out again at the end of two months.

The mother and daughter drove to the convent gate. The nun whose duty it was to open it, apprised the community, by tolling a bell, that a victim was about to enter. The abbess was awaiting her arrival in the lodge, and whispered to her, in a gently imperious tone, to thank the nuns for the favour accorded by accepting her as their companion. The nuns crowded round to stare, peeping over each other's shoulders, and mounting on chairs. They criticised her person in an under tone. One thought her pretty, another ugly; one sympathetic, another antipathetic; one held that a mild disposition, another that obstinacy, was marked on her countenance. Poor Enrichetta was overcome, suffocated. She would have preferred death.

The two months passed, and no mother appeared to claim her child. Enrichetta might have been prepared for the disappointment. Every nun in the convent asked the same question, "Do you wish to take the veil?" On her replying "No," they smiled, and rejoined, "St. Bennet will never let you slip through his fingers." The very portress gave her to understand the hopelessness of her case. "Patience, my dear," she said. "With a good grace, or with a bad grace, you will have to drink this cup."

* Mr. Bentley advertises a translation, *Memoirs of Henrietta Caracciolo*, which we have not seen.

"What cup do you mean? My mother does not come, and I should like to know the cause of the delay."

"You expect her in vain. She has left Naples for Reggio."

In spite of the remonstrances of her father's family, a course of moral torture at last succeeded in driving Enrichetta to take the veil, with much about the feeling of despair which drives people at their wits' end to throw themselves from the top of a precipice. The mother afterwards consoled herself with a second husband. The daughter was dead to the world; possessing no longer either a parent, sister, relations, or friends, she had abdicated her own personality. On the other hand, the mother still held firm hold of the pomps and pleasures of this wicked world.

It is not our intention to describe the ceremonies by which the warm-hearted young woman was cut off from all that was dear to her; our space will better be devoted to the experience she gained by the fatal step.

The examination (in this case performed by the vicar-general of the church at Naples) previous to pronouncing the vows was originally intended to ascertain whether the novice were acting at complete liberty. But as everything in this world is apt to degenerate, it is now a mere formality.

To avoid the case of the girl's expressing, in the course of her examination, her dislike to the condition which she is embracing either through the constraint of her parents, the cajoleries of her confessor, or crosses in love, clerical diplomacy orders that the scapulary be instantly torn from the novice who hesitates in the course of this trial, and that she be banished from the convent for four-and-twenty hours, with the rebuke, "Go and keep company with the lost and abandoned! You are unworthy to live with the spouses of Christ." This degrading insult, which no girl would have the courage to brave, renders the novitiate a useless preliminary, and binds her hand and foot the moment she has entered it.

It was proposed to secure Enrichetta, while still a novice, through the agency of an unusually adroit confessor, a canon some forty years of age, with expressive and extremely changeable features, who, if he were not, fully deserved to be, a Jesuit.

After a multitude of compliments and ceremonies, he carelessly asked the young lady's name, her position in life, and several other particulars. Then, crossing his legs and rubbing his hands, he added, "I suppose, signorina, you have quite decided to be a nun?"

"No, father."

"And why not?"

"Because seclusion is most distasteful to me."

"With time, you will become so accustomed to this pleasant prison, that nothing on earth could make you leave it. You did not then enter the convent voluntarily?"

"No; my mother compelled me to it."

"Ah! your mother compelled you to it!"

After this exclamation, he appeared for a moment plunged in deep thought. He proceeded: "Tell me, signorina, have you ever been in love?"

"Twice."

"What was your object when in love?"

"To marry the man whom I loved."

"Him, and no other man? Will you open your heart to me completely?"

"I have never had anything in view but marriage."

"And how has your love concluded?"

"I have been deserted by those I loved."

"Remark, my daughter," he then exclaimed, "remark the difference between a worldly and a heavenly spouse. One abandons you in spite of your affection; the other remains faithful to you, while you regard him not and persist in repulsing him. One fills the days of your youth with bitterness, the other would load you with ineffable and eternal pleasures. He opens his mansion to you, introduces you to his family, stretches towards you his open arms, and desires you to forget, in the sublime consolations of his love, the afflictions which men have made you suffer."

"Is it true or not," the lady answered, "that man was created to live in society? For my own part, I love the world, and take pleasure in associating with my fellow-creatures. Moreover, I do not believe that you yourself have a horror of the human race; for if such were the case, why are you here, instead of leading an anchorite's life in the midst of deserts?"

"To these questions," said the canon, rising and taking his hat, "I will give you a reply at our next conference."

What is the peculiar mark, the characteristic trait, which distinguishes convents for women from convents for men? According to Madame Caracciolo, it is the practice of confession.

In 1571, an ordonnance of Archbishop Carafa closed all the women's convents within his jurisdiction to monks, and allowed them to receive secular priests only as confessors. "This reform," Sister Fulvia's Chronicle records, "discontented all the nuns; because the monks displayed so much piety, that we could never believe secular priests could become equally familiar with claustral discipline."

If the practice of confession is simple and easy for monks, it is quite a different thing for nuns. It is an affair which absorbs them day and night, incessantly occupies their thoughts, and supplies inexhaustible employment for every leisure hour. Little by little it becomes for them the *sine qua non* of their existence, an occult science which is acquired in the silence of the cloister both by personal experience and mutual instruction. Suppose a council of the Church to suppress the supreme delights of the confessional in women's convents, the State need trouble itself no further about future laws against monachism. Women's convents, at least, would close of themselves before many weeks were over.

Before entering San Gregorio Armeno as a novice, Enrichetta had seen the confessionals there. They were little cabinets carefully latticed and grated on all sides, with a camp-stool in the middle. She inquired why the nuns made their confession seated, contrary to the universal custom. The reply was, that it was impossible to remain kneeling for three or four hours, and that the penitents only knelt at the moment when absolution was given.

"What!" she exclaimed, in astonishment. "Does it take two or three hours to tell your confessor that you have neither been willing nor able to sin during a few days of cloistered life! What, then, are poor worldlings to do, who are much more exposed to temptation than you are? Are labourers to desert the fields, and shopkeepers to close their shops, in order to spend half a day on their knees in a confessional?"

"We are well aware," they answered, "that it is usual in the world to make a confession of a few minutes only. As to us, we confess not only our venial sins—for no mortal sins are committed in a convent—but we also desire that our confessor (a worthy confidential man expressly selected for the purpose) should direct every act of our lives. We tell him our thoughts, our affairs, our projects; for he is the only friend, the only support we have. He is the only mediator between Heaven, the world, and the cloister, allowed to a nun. Separated from our families, we find in him a father's love, a mother's tenderness, a brother's and a sister's friendship and affection. In our solitude, his intimacy personifies the universe. After the Deity, the confessor is everything to us. You yourself, very soon—and especially if you would dismiss your ridiculous old confessor, and take a younger one more suited to direct your mind—would learn to pass a couple of hours deliciously in the confessional."

"A sad satisfaction!" she replied. "I had rather play Rossini's music for a couple of hours on my piano."

In short, the infatuation of the nuns for priests and monks is, according to this lady, incredible. With nuns, an affair touching their confessor is a matter of state, a *casus belli*. What reconciles them to their prison is the liberty they enjoy of seeing and writing to the priest for whom they have formed an attachment. This liberty binds them so strongly to the convent, that they are wretched if, through serious illness, or before finally taking the veil, they have to spend any length of time in the midst of their families, with their father, their mother, and their brothers. For it is scarcely probable that parents would permit a young person to spend hours together in mysterious colloquy with a priest or a monk, or to keep up a continual correspondence with him.

There are even nuns who will not incur the responsibility of making out their own washing-bill without the intervention of their confessor. One of them saw hers three times a day. In the morning she carried him provisions for his

dinner; later, when he came to say mass, she served him with coffee and biscuits; and after dinner, she remained a long while with him, in order, she said, to reckon the expenses she had incurred in the morning. And not satisfied with such frequent visits, they wrote to each other in the intervals.

A nun had been in love with a priest ever since he had served in the church as clerk. Being received into holy orders, he was appointed sacristan. But their liaison having been denounced by his colleagues, he was forbidden by his superiors even to pass through the street where the convent was situated. The poor woman had the romantic courage to remain faithful to her attachment for sixteen long years, during which they wrote to each other daily, interchanged presents, and had occasional secret interviews in the parlour. At last the superiors were changed; and the nun succeeded, in her maturer years, in obtaining him for her confessor. Grateful to the saint whom she regarded as her patroness for the favour thus accorded to her, the nun presented her (the saint) with a liberal quantity of flowers and wax-tapers. She distributed bonbons amongst the whole community, as is the custom when a marriage takes place, received the congratulations of her companions, and even copies of verses composed for the occasion. Finally, she built at her own expense a separate confessional, to be at liberty to receive him at any hour of the day.

A great personage one morning sent for the abess of San Gregorio, to show her a letter which he himself had found in the street. It was a letter to a confessor from a nun, lost by her servant, which grossly violated common decorum.

The friars and nuns of Southern Italy are far removed from the Christian charity preached by St. Bennet and practised by the clergy of the primitive church. A proverb says of the Italian monks, "They meet without becoming acquainted; they live together without loving; they die without lamenting each other." The people are also fond of quoting: "Their religion is like linen clothes; they put it on and take it off at will. When it is dirty, they send it to the wash."

Enrichetta easily obtained the charge of tending the sick, for the major part of the nuns refused to undertake it. Some had never once condescended to perform that duty; whilst those who suffered from chronic complaints remained for years without even catching sight of their fellow-nuns. During a "sister's" illness, and after her death, she is put upon her trial by those about her. A great part of the day is spent in commentaries on her case. Discussions are held to ascertain why Heaven has sent her such or such an affliction; and then she is despatched to purgatory, or to worse, according to the temper of the respective speakers.

It is customary in convents to dress the dead before interring them. This duty (an old Basilian tradition) falls to the lot of four lay

sisters. One of them, a demon in the shape of a nun, refused, one summer's night, to rise and decently arrange a deceased companion. This same lay sister had to lead a poor blind creature to church on Sundays. Being tired of the task, she asked to be discharged from it. Her request not being granted, she one day pushed her patient from the top of the staircase. The consequences of the fall proved fatal. The abbess was entreated to employ this monster on any other duty than that of nursing the infirm. The prayer was not listened to.

At nuns' funerals, neither pity nor regret is manifested. Sincere grief, unaffected sorrow, the tribute of a tear on the grave of a friend, are, in a convent, rarer phenomena than the sympathy shown by people of the world with scenic emotions. Insensibility, which was a virtue with the stoics, is with nuns the effect of egotism and calculation. Interments take place in the morning. As soon as the corpse is laid in the ground, the breakfast-bell rings; and woe to the lay sisters if, in consequence of their attendance at the funeral, the macaroni gets overdone.

In order to keep their patrimony intact for the heir of their name, an unhappy family had compelled their two eldest daughters to take the veil, and had reserved the same lot for a third. With this intention, at the age of twelve, the poor girl was brought by her parents to Naples. She was accompanied to the convent by a spaniel which she had brought up from a puppy. At the moment of separation, the dog could not be made to understand that he must now absolutely quit his mistress. More affectionate than her parents, he allowed them to depart; but when he lost sight of her, he began howling piteously. In vain the porter kicked him out, dogs not being allowed to be kept in convents; he remained howling in the streets all night long. Next morning, the neighbours, out of compassion, offered him food, which he refused. For two days and nights the same thing continued. The new boarder within was inconsolable. The nuns got tired of this display of attachment, and resolved to put a stop to it. The third morning, the faithful animal was found killed, no one knew how, before his mistress's living tomb.

How do nuns observe their solemn vow of poverty? Their outer garment is a coarse woollen gown, under which they wear the finest of linen, including cambric and lawn pocket-handkerchiefs. On fête-days, they have, suspended at their side, garlands of silver, or of silver gilt. Truly we may quote the proverb, that the habit does not make the monk. Their vow of humility prevents their having a wrought-iron head-piece to their bed [the curtains, often magnificent, are cleverly suspended from an iron ring attached to the ceiling]; but the vow of poverty allows three soft wool mattresses, and a pillow stuffed with feathers and trimmed with lace. They may not have articles of luxury on their bedside table; but corner cupboards can legitimately receive old

china-ware and valuable plate. They are forbidden to keep much cash in their cells; but in the convent there is a place called the "depôt," where all the nuns, separately, amass all the money they please, or can.

As to their diet, their abstinence is in no wise inferior to that of St. Jean the Faster. In the morning, they partake of four dishes, one of which consists of pastry; of one dish at night. Their bread is of superior quality. Out of devotion, they refrain from eating fresh fruits on Fridays, which does not hinder their consuming jellies, jams, and preserves at discretion.

Every nun has a particular saint for her protector, and in whose honour she makes high holiday; for which grand solemnity whole weeks of preparation are required. Ingenuity is hard pressed to render it as splendid as possible, either by getting into debt if short of cash, or by spending what they have in hand on presents to the priests, monks, and clerks who are employed in their church, and who serve at mass. The same thing happens on the occasion of their own proper fête-day. The festivities at Christmas and Easter are on a scale which renders description difficult.

But the principal occupation of convents is the making of pastry. It is, for Christian female communities, what cake-making is in Oriental harems. Each convent has a reputation for its own particular speciality. One is renowned for buns, another for cakes. Macarons are the glory of a third, while a fourth stakes its reputation on biscuits. The little tarts sent out by the Carmelite confectioners of the Croce di San Luca, would make a Neapolitan turn his back upon pine-apples. For pastry-making purposes, every nun has the convent oven at her command for a whole day, reckoning from midnight; but as that is often insufficient, she keeps it going a second, and even a third day. Consequently, the lay sisters can hardly hold up their heads for want of sleep, and the health of not a few of them suffers. There are certain of the most elderly nuns who have never witnessed the ceremonies of the holy week, because, just then, they had not the time to go to the choir to peep into the church. A monk, who was preaching a course of Lent sermons, found his audience dwindling away day by day, until he was almost left in solitude. The nuns were busy preparing their confectionery.

When the sweets are distributed, parents and relations always have the smallest share, thanks to the priests, who insist on the practical application of the precept, "Whosoever loves father and mother better than me, is not worthy of me.—If any one comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, nay even his own life, he cannot be my disciple." In accordance with which, literally interpreted, the confessors pervert these women's natural affections, persuading them that they constitute, they, their whole and sole family. Thus isolated, they yield complete submission to the empire of their spiritual fathers, who

accordingly secure, amongst other things, the lion's share of the pastry produce.

Indifference to family ties is a natural corollary to taking the veil. One day, two nuns, sisters, were occupied with their devotions in the choir, measuring, as in the days of the Decameron, their hour of prayer by a clepsydra. They had an only brother, engaged in the diplomatic service. A ring at the bell announced a communication from without. The lay sister hastened to learn what it was. A piece of sorrowful news for them had arrived. After failing in his duty to the government, their brother had blown his brains out.

"What is the matter with you?" they asked the sister, who hurried back in great agitation.

"The prince's servant——"

"What does he want?"

"Your brother——" The sister hesitated.

"Out with it, for Heaven's sake! Is he ill?"

"If it were only that!" exclaimed the sister.

"He is dead!"

"Holy Virgin Mary! Dead! How? He is dead?"

"He has destroyed himself." And she related the facts.

The two nuns exchanged glances, raised their eyes to heaven with joined hands, and then, with icy indifference, "Anna!" said one.

"Camilla!" said the other.

"May Heaven receive his soul! But the water in the clepsydra is nearly out. Let us conclude our meditation." There was no further mention of the brother's death until at meal-time, between the cheese and the fruit, as people say.

Another nun, while the refectory bell was ringing, received a letter acquainting her with her sister's death. "Don't mention, for the present, what has happened," she whispered to the person who delivered it. "I should have to abstain from eating, and I am dying with hunger."

As to the vow of humility, Madame Caracciolo tells us that nuns who do not boast of their noble blood are quite as rare as snow-white flies. They will receive, as boarders, none but young ladies belonging to the oldest families. Thus, two girls, the offspring of a plebeian father and a patrician mother, were not admitted into the convent until they had formally promised to repudiate their father's name and adopt their mother's. Nuns, in their squabbles, always bring up the question as to which is more noble than the other.

There were some who, when a procession was expected to pass, claimed precedence everywhere, even on the belvederes on the top of the roof. At their approach, the other nuns were expected to give way immediately. They did not even scruple to make them move while hearing mass, if the places occupied pleased their fancy. A severe and stern preacher having had the hardihood to reproach them with the life they led, they gave him to understand that it was not the place of low-born ecclesiastics to make such remarks to the daughters of Neapo-

litan dukes and princes. Finally, there are convents where the superior offers her knee to be kissed, and others even where, like the Pope, she receives kisses on her slipper.

The ignorance of some of these abbesses is hard to describe. People mixing with the world would not credit their stupidity. According to one of them, what antiquaries tell us about the destruction of Pompeii is only a mass of absurdity. Pompeii was once inhabited by a race of unbelieving miscreants, who destroyed with hammers, in the public square, the miraculous statue of St. Januarius. The mountain which overhung the town, trembling at such audacity, immediately vomited the deluge of burning ashes which buried for ever the heretical city.

Enrichetta had been denounced to the abbess as a reader of "mundane" books—that is, books treating of other than religious topics. Being watched without suspecting it, she was caught by the superior with a book in her hand.

"What pious work are you reading there, my daughter?" she inquired. Not having the time to hide the book, there was no choice except to show it, but not without fear and trembling as to the rebuke which might ensue. The abbess put on her spectacles, read the title-page, closed the volume, and returned it, saying, "Memoirs of St. Helena. Ah! The life of the mother of St. Constantine! Poor child! How unjustly they calumniate you!"

It was the Memorial of St. Helena. Soon afterwards, Enrichetta acquired the certainty that the excellent abbess of San Gregorio had never heard of Napoleon the First.

The privation of liberty, the uniformity of their existence, the monotony of their impressions, the frivolity of their daily talk, and (for the majority of nuns who have dwelt in convents from their early childhood) their extremely limited education, cause a third of their number to become insane, or at least monomaniacs. The same fact, provoked by the same causes, has been remarked in penitentiaries where the cellular system is followed. And if isolation is dangerous in the cooler climates of Europe and America, how still more fatal must it prove in hot, and especially in volcanic countries, where man cannot, with impunity, allow his mental and bodily powers to remain idle! Madame Caracciolo saw enough to convince her that the statistics of conventual seclusion, if they could only be forthcoming, would afford startling instances.

One nun could never touch paper; its contact threw her into convulsions. Her lay sister never left her a moment. When her mistress recited the service, it was she who had to turn the leaves. If a letter arrived, she had to break the seal and hold it open until read through. To keep her own secrets, the nun was therefore obliged to be waited on solely by attendants who had never learned the alphabet.

Another, whenever she heard mass on fête-days, fell into a sort of catalepsy. If a current of air ruffled the skirt of her garment, she began

groaning piteously, but without having the sense to stir from the spot. One day, a nun beside her fainted, leaning her head upon her shoulder. She did not stir, but would have allowed her companion to fall to the ground if others had not come to her assistance. Another, being ill in bed, stuck the sheet full of pins all round her, and then gathered herself into a heap on the pillow, where she remained motionless, in order not to disturb, she said, the marvellous symmetry of her couch. Another made little dolls out of rags, and then rocked them on her bosom, calling them her sons. There were also two old lunatics, one of whom was constantly conversing with Joachim Murat and Ferdinand the First. The second, whenever she heard the drums beat, cried, "The French! Here come the French!" One night, she threw herself into a well, and was drowned. But the convent which contains the greatest number of insane inmates, is that of the Romites, whose horrible and truly Brahminical austerities lead still more rapidly to madness. This sepulchre for living women was founded by a half-crazy female hypocrite, with the approbation, and under the patronage, of the Romish Church.

By her vigorous and persevering efforts Enrichetta broke loose from Benedictine fetters. For these endeavours in detail, the reader is referred to the book. After her liberation, she became acquainted with a worthy man of elevated sentiments and energetic character.

He loved her, for the sorrows she had borne;
And she loved him, that he did pity her.

In short, they determined to marry. The Church formally refused its consent. Arguments and supplications were useless before the monumental and inexorable "Non Possumus;" so their union was blessed by a priest of a different communion. With a husband who adores her, whose love she reciprocates, fulfilling the duties of a good wife, mother, and citizen, Madame Caracciolo asks why she should be considered an unworthy object of Divine mercy and grace?

FORWARD!

On, on! Though your star be crossed
By the black night-rack, and your way be lost,
Though the breakers beat, and your feet may shrink,
Delay were death on the darksome brink!

On, on! Though you fain would creep
Into rest and slumber of love's own sleep,
Or, lingering, wait for the evening sun,
Red-lit and golden when work is done!

On, on! Though your dream might be
To rest awhile on the moonlight sea,
While whispering wave and the night-wind sigh
Would woo you to peace by their lullaby.

On, on! Though the waves below
Are ringing your knell as you onward go!
On, on! Though the winds before
May waft you wayward to death's dark shore!

On, on! Through the wind and rain
With the blinding tears and the burning vein!
When the toil is o'er, and the pain is past,
What recks it *all*, if we rest at last?

CHINESE AMUSEMENTS.

THERE is a whiz, a buzz, a whirring music in the air, all sorts of grotesque objects are floating about, rising and falling and dancing to and fro; there are broad-winged birds, and many-coloured dragons, lizards, bees, and butterflies, and painted circles and squares, and radiated suns and moons and stars. Most of them have pendent tails, and strings in their centres, the linking line which connects these aerial monsters with the earth. Follow down the thread to the ground, and you will find at its end a grave-looking man, who, though he devotes his principal attention to the evolutions and the harmonies of his own belongings, now and then silently turns to contemplate those of his neighbour. These are Chinese kite-flyers. Kite-flying is the amusement of the young and the old—but more especially of the old—and these kites exhibit in a wonderful way the odd inventive fancies, the strange traditions, and the immemorial habits of this singular race. The English kite took its name, no doubt, from the bird, of which the primitive aspirant was probably a rude imitation, but the Chinese designations are multitudinous: fung-tsang, the wind guitar; chi-yan, paper-hawk; kwin-chi, neither more nor less than the English kite, bird and toy; and all sorts of fanciful and poetical titles. The form of the ancient French kite was probably that of a beast, and not of a bird, as they call it a *cerf-volant*, a flying stag.

In China people say, and there is some truth in it, that the swaddled babe appears almost as solemn and as staid as a mandarin, and that there, more than anywhere, the child is the father of the man. The mandarin looks like a giant child, the child a dwarf mandarin. Especially among the opulent the child is smothered with costly garments. If a girl, the aristocratic torturing of the feet begins, and in the morning the cries of the poor victims undergoing the cruciate process may often be heard in the streets,—but both sexes are subjected to the painting art. Pearl powder upon the forehead, vermilion upon the lips, jet upon the eyebrows, rouge upon the cheeks, fantastic, costly, and elaborated caps upon the head, cumbrous garments upon the body, so that the lad, almost before he is able to walk, is encumbered with more clothes than he can carry, ornaments more than enough to interfere with his locomotive powers, and he seems already a little old man. Stiff as a bonze, and ready, as it were, to be stuck into a niche of a Buddhist temple—he is as if petrified into an image of everlasting contemplation. The sobriety of age is incarnated with the plastic nature of youth, and the sports and amusements of the *siau-hai-tze*, the little son child, are shared by the *yü-tsin*, the *tsu-yü*,

and the tsung-tsu, the father, the grandfather, and the great-grandfather, of whom he is the miniature model—all are kite-flyers.

It is not an uncommon subject for a picture* in China to exhibit a languishing small-footed young lady sitting in a grove, with a pipe in her hand, a female slave at her side pouring out the tea into an ornamented cup upon a lacquered table, looking fascinatingly upon a handsome youth, to whom she has "never told her love," for the simple reason that she has never had the opportunity of telling it. The young man is standing on a bridge built upon a neighbouring hill near a temple—a temple decorated with scarlet roof and golden horns, half shaded with flowery forest trees, with a fountain of water flowing by—and the said young man is looking, not on the temple, not on the wood, not on the water, no, not even on the fair and languishing young lady with the golden-lily feet, but his gaze is devoutly fixed upon the kite that is borne by the wind, that is dancing towards the clouds, and making sweet music as it ascends. Will not the echoes bring the sighs of the pretty maiden to the ears of the ko-ngai, the beloved one, so absorbed in the contemplation of that distracting seduction? Alas! no; he hears no sound but the whistle of the instrument which is running up the string of the kite, and whose triumphant progress to its goal is celebrated by the harmonies which are gradually lost in the distance. Another picture is now before us, in which a whole group of boys are gathered together to see the wonders worked by their elders in the kite-flying art. There are kites with their adorned tails, and tails, by the way—men's tails—are objects of such reverence in China, that a man would much prefer the penalty of losing his ears, or his nose, or both, to that of losing his pien-tze (cue), which loss, indeed, is the most opprobrious infliction upon a felon. Other kites look like nosegays of many-coloured flowers suspended on high; and if smiles of wondering approval can be fancied as expressed on any Chinese visage, those smiles are there.

But let us stop for a moment to say that the history of men's tails in China is instructive and entertaining. They were forced upon the Chinese by the conquering Manchos more than two hundred years ago, and, from being the mark and evidence of subjugation, have become the most cherished of personal possessions. The care and culture of the cue is the daily concern and the constant amusement of the whole nation. The man is the object of envy whose tail touches the ground, and it is intertwined with gay ribbons, while the black tressed hair is as glossy as the back of a raven. A labourer guards his tail with as much pride as a lord, and when engaged in any occupation which may tend to its disarrangement, he twists it round his head. But no servant dares to present himself before his master unless his tail hangs down perpendicularly outside his long robes. A handsome gentleman's cue is as much an object

of attraction to a Chinese lady, as is the smallness of the crushed foot of a lady to a Chinese lover. One of the sports of the Chinese is to tie their companions together by the tails, the untying being sometimes difficult enough for the exercise of the science of a Davenport. But the tail is a grand instrument in the hands of the police, and often leads to the capture and safe keeping of a misdoer. We possess a splendid tail upon which hangs a tale worth telling. There was a burglar of Hong-Kong, greatly distinguished in his profession, the planner of most of the housebreakings that took place in the colony. He was discovered, sent to prison, and, as some security for the future, and a fit punishment for the past, he was deprived of his cue. He had so much influence, and so much money, that he was (probably with the cognisance of his bribed keepers) carried away in a sedan-chair by his confederates while passing with the chain-gang through a street in Hong-Kong. Burglaries on a large scale soon disturbed the public peace, and the convict was again captured and sentenced to imprisonment; but he escaped a second time with the man to whom he was chained, having no doubt arranged the matter with those who had him in custody. Burglaries were again rife, and we well knew by whom they were planned, and by whose agents they were executed. But he was so well served, and so well concealed, that for some time all researches were vain, and the felonious operations were carried on uninterruptedly. One day a little boy, who had been imprisoned for some small offence, sent a message to the governor, saying that, if pardoned, he, being acquainted with the haunts of the felon, would put the police on his track, and enable them to capture him. He led them to a large house, where a gentleman was sitting, handsomely clad, and with a beautiful unexceptionable tail. "That is your man," said the boy. "Impossible," was the reply; "the rogue's tail is in the jail!" Reassured, the policemen sprang upon the hero, seized his cue, upon which the thief jumped out of the window, leaving a false cue in its captor's hand. No dignitary was ever adorned with a less objectionable pien-tze. These false tails are often suspended for sale in barbers' shops, not always for the use of the thieving fraternity, for as old age and exposure diminish the thickness of the chevelure, the Chinese hairdresser is sometimes called on to perform restorative functions somewhat resembling those of the former wig-maker in England. The cutting off of hair in China is equivalent to an abandonment of the world. In our Catholic nunneries it is the final act, performed by others, and deemed the most interesting evidence of the devotion of the young novitiate to the conventual life. In China it is a self-infliction; it is not unusual for a bride who has been disappointed in the character, or has suspected the fidelity of a bridegroom, to cut off her hair, and send it as a token that she contemplates suicide, which, indeed, is in China a very common refuge for misery. The plebeian mode of destruction is ordinarily opium, the

* See Chinese Kites, vol. xi., page 17.

patrician the eating of gold-leaf—a very uneasy and lingering mode of dying. It is, however, considered very improper to interrupt family enjoyments or amusements by an act of self-destruction, and we remember one of our servants reporting an event in his family—his wife had hanged herself, and, what was exceedingly improper, she had done it on a day on which he was particularly busy.

Suicides in China are often characteristically singular. They are not unfrequently committed for the purpose of revenge, and a life is willingly sacrificed in order to bring punishment on those who may be compromised or injured by the death of the self-destroyer. There are many cases in which, by the laws of China, persons are made responsible for the acts of others, and subjected to death punishments, for deeds with which they have had nothing to do. We know of a case in which a very beautiful girl who had been purchased for a large sum of money by a rich merchant, determined to avenge a supposed slight by immolating herself, with the double purpose of inflicting on him the pecuniary loss of her purchased value, and of denouncing him to the authorities as responsible for her death. She dressed herself in her gayest garments, took opium, and summoned her friends and relations to witness her decease. It is not unusual for Chinamen who come from the interior, having failed to realise their expectations of success in commercial or literary speculations, afraid of encountering the reproaches of their friends and relations should they return home, to hang or drown themselves amidst the persons or in the places which have been associated with their disappointments. It is rare that any house in which such an event occurs escapes the visitation of the low officials, who, as well as their superordinates, seldom lose the opportunity of "squeezing" the inhabitants, the popular term for exacting the payment of "hush-money."

There are many Chinese books giving the history and describing the machinery of the national drama. Of these Morrison, in his Dictionary, gives a curious synopsis. Some authorities say that Suy the emperor—for the Chinese attribute everything that is influential or important to an imperial source—invented the drama A.D. 610, and called it Kang-ken-hi, others report that the Emperor Yuen-tsong originated the drama, and gave it the name of Chuen-ki, in A.D. 740. Under another dynasty it was called Hi-keuh, and under a third Yuen-pun-tsa-keih. This power of creating new names is one of the most curious attributes of supreme authority. The Tae-pings, in the height of their success, put forth a proclamation ordering that characters bearing a certain meaning should be replaced by others, but the edict remained, as may well be supposed, altogether without effect. So Louis le Grand, in the plenitude of his power, did alter the gender of a word, by calling for *Mon Carosse*; the noun up to his days having been deemed feminine. In the year 1120, the Emperor Hwuy-Tsung was so amused by the costumes and the gesticula-

tions of some ambassadors who brought tribute to his court, that he directed them to be perpetuated on the stage. Under the present dynasty, the characters applied to the drama mean "The joy of peace and prosperity." The great repertory of the Chinese drama belongs to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It is a collection of one hundred pieces, from which the plays best known to Europeans have been translated into English, French, and German. In all these, the dialogues are in prose, interspersed with songs or fragments of poetry, the phraseology of which is often so essentially and peculiarly Chinese, that it can hardly be made intelligible to Europeans. Poetry has seized and incorporated, in a condensed language of its own, all the legends and traditions of the empire, in tracing which to their source a stranger is often utterly lost. The characters are grouped under nine heads; 1. Principal male actors. 2. Secondary actors. 3. Courtesans, to whom the name of a female libidinous monster is applied. 4. Foxes, i.e. Officials. 5. Buffoons, obscene fellows, whose faces are daubed with black or white paint. 6. Paou—old women—the title of a dirty female bird. 7. Naoou, monkeys who are said to pick vermin out of the heads of tigers, and to feed upon their brains, i.e. procuresses. 8. Jokers, called slippery spies; and 9. Wit inspirers. The preface gives details as to the proper subjects of dramatic acts, among which are, Transformations by gods and demons; court ceremonials; portraits of scholars and statesmen; hooting down adulterers and exposing slanderers; war-scenes with swords and clubs; misfortunes of exiled mandarins and orphan children; winds, flowers, snows, and moons, i.e. love pieces; smoke, flowers, dirty faces, i.e. exhibitions of low life; deities and devils ad libitum. In ancient times the great stage entrance was called the Spirits' door.

Dramatic representations are popular in China; but players in general occupy a low social position, and are excluded from any of the four grades into which respectable society is divided—the sage, the agriculturist, the soldier, and the mechanic. In the large cities are theatres built for the accommodation of the public, with a pit for the commonalty, who stand; boxes for the quality, who sit; and a stage with its appliances of scenery and mechanism, for the actors. The entrance for the less privileged orders is gratuitous, but something is paid for the more elevated places. Strolling players circulate over the country, and when by public subscription a sufficient sum is raised to defray the expenses of their visit and allow them adequate recompense for their trouble, an extempore theatre is erected—if no permanent edifice exist—with incredible rapidity and marvellous ingenuity. Bamboo pillars, bamboo rafters, bamboo floors, are bound together with singular art, and without the employment of a hammer or a nail, and suddenly a light but not inelegant structure rises, almost as if by magic, from the ground. Huge boxes of garments, weapons, musical in-

struments, conveyed by boats through the rivers and canals, or borne on the shoulders of coolies, swung on bamboo poles, and the performances, once begun, are scarcely interrupted for many days and many nights. The Buddhist and Taoist priests are often the principal movers in the invitations given to the strollers. They collect, by their dependents, moneys to pay for the recreations, and inscribe the names of the contributors on bright vermilion papers, which are posted at the entrances of the temples in their neighbourhood, and for whose benefit the performances are to take place.

The number and the reputation of the performers, and the duration of the performances, depend on the amounts collected. The fame of a favourite idol, especially where he is believed to have worked recent miracles, will sometimes bring considerable money-offerings for the theatre to be erected in the vicinity of his shrine. Funds being raised, in four-and-twenty hours a building capable of conveniently accommodating two thousand persons is completed, and while the performances are going on business is neglected, shops are deserted, sedan-bearers abandon their posts, and everything is sacrificed throughout the neighbourhood to the theatrical display, which generally lasts from three to four days. There are only short periods of rest between the representations, to allow time for repasts and for repose. The theatre is scarcely cleared of the spectators that have witnessed one exhibition, before shoals of candidates present themselves to occupy the vacant places. The clearings out and the fillings in are repeated several times a day. The amusements are not confined to dramatic pieces. Interludes of prestidigitation tricks, tumblings and gymnastic exploits, often vary the diversions. All around the theatre are temporary gambling-stands, cookery-shops, fruit-stalls, and frequently houses of reception of the worst character. Worship within the temple is held to be quite compatible with profligacy without, and there is nothing in the example of the bonzes to encourage what is good, or to deter from what is evil. They levy a rental from all who sell these wares to the visitors.

In these dramas national grievances get a shadowy redress, which is some comfort to those who find no real shelter from oppression. Punishment is seen to overtake extortion and corruption in a way seldom verified in the reality of life. The stage is made the reprover of offences too often placed in daily experience beyond or above the reach of official cognisance. A thousand faces brighten when some rapacious hard-hearted mandarin is brought on the stage, carrying on his iniquities and cruelties, and is "hoist with his own petard," tumbled into the pit he has dug for some poor man's destruction, overtaken by the all-penetrating eye of the emperor (O that the Son of Heaven *could* but know how many such wicked ones *we* know!), humiliated, deposed, decapitated.

Female characters have often to perform an important part in the Chinese drama; but the

old English usage is still preserved: no woman ever appears on the stage, and the fair sex are represented by boys, or men with treble voices.

There is nothing more amusing in these exhibitions than the attempts of vulgar coarse-handed big-footed boys to exhibit the simpering graces of Chinese ladies of rank, who are hardly able to totter along on the crushed pegs upon which they stand, if indeed they can be said to stand, who are often blown over by a blast of wind, or seen to save themselves from falling by catching hold of a chair or a table, or by the use of a stick, or by resting on attendant slave or slaves. But as a lady of refinement has the happy art of exhibiting her golden-lilied feet just peeping out from beneath her silken garments, it may be fancied how grotesque are the imitations of a vulgar youth, and with what delight and self-gratulation the real blue blood—the ladies belonging to the buttoned aristocracy—look upon the abortive efforts of the common players; then, again, the ladies, whose delicate fingers show that they do not work,—because the nails—which are allowed to grow many inches long—prove that they *cannot* work,—feel no small pride in contemplating the long metallic claws which are stuck on as substitutes for the transparent henna-coloured nail (*chi-kiah*), the possession of which, next to a small foot, is the glory and the ambition of a fashionable woman. All the plays, all the novels, and it may be said all the literature of China, bear the impress of that peculiar educational system which permeates the national mind. Quotations from the writings of the sages, fragments of poetry, scraps of ancient history, constantly interrupt, as they are supposed to decorate, the development of the story. This influence of the past on the present is everywhere visible, and explains many of the seeming mysteries of Chinese life. A revolt has been often subdued by a felicitous reference to some aphorism of an ancient book, and a well-timed quotation will suddenly terminate the most excited controversy.

The very highest orders seldom frequent the public theatres, but hire and invite to their houses, for the entertainment of themselves and their guests, strolling players, popular conjurors, tumblers, and buffoons, and other such artists and actors. The more distinguished dramatis personæ form themselves into corporations, and adopt some attractive and high-sounding name by which they are commonly known, such as The Brotherhood of Reason and Courtesy; The Company of Splendid Visitations; The Society of Fragrant Flowers; The Mirrors of what Was and Is. When the play opens, the audience are not left in ignorance of what is to happen, as each actor, on his appearance, tells the company who he is, and what he is to say and to do. Bottom's instructions are admirably carried out, "the bill of properties such as the play wants" being all laid before the spectators.

The actors are generally clad in the strange costumes worn under the Ming dynasty, of which much ancient Chinese porcelain gives a very accurate representation, and this period of

Chinese history furnishes the greater portion of the tales and traditions which are introduced upon the stage. It is not always easy to disentangle the truth from the fiction of these dramatised stories, except, indeed, where the supernatural is introduced, as is often prodigally done. Few of the authors are known, but many of the pieces are of considerable antiquity, and are often faithful records of the usages of past times. The words of the drama are usually uttered with a sort of sing-song monotonous recitation, interspersed with poetry, sinking now and then into a scarcely audible utterance, and anon rising into outbreaks of most impassioned rage and violence. Loud crashes of dissonant music, vehement beating of gongs, the rolling of kettle-drums, and the squeaking of wind instruments, fill up the interstices with intolerable discord. Only a small part of the dialogue is heard by the audience. The pantomimic action is, however, so excellent, that the story is tolerably understood. The clang and the clatter which is so discordant to the European ear, is most acceptable to the Chinese. It is especially when battles are fought on the stage that the shouting and the crashing are beyond endurance; but noise is an element in which the Chinaman revels, and of which he can never have enough.

No Oriental women dress with such comely modesty as the Chinese; their garments cover the bosom and reach up to the chin; but the language used on the stage is often gross and unlicensed, and the exhibitions which are most applauded are sometimes far too licentious to be tolerated by European opinion.

The painted scenes are seldom or never changed—unity and continuity of action are generally preserved—but when a change of place is needful to the progress and development of the drama, something is introduced to show that the actors are transported to another locality; one man is seen scampering over the boards, riding on a wooden stick, sometimes with a horse's head, and sometimes without, and he whips the supposititious beast as he crosses and recrosses the stage. Sometimes a real horse is introduced, sometimes a sedan conveying the rider, or the occupier, to the appointed place, so that the line of continuity may not be broken. If he have to pass a bridge, he paces first up and then down, the bridges in China being generally not level, but with steps ascending and descending. If he have to cross the water, he shows in his gestures the rolling motion of a boat, and shaking himself as evidence of his weariness, announces that he has reached the end of his journey in safety, and that the scene is transferred to the spot at which he has arrived. And here we may ask had Shakespeare ever heard of the Chinese theatrical devices, as most assuredly no Chinaman ever heard of Shakespeare? Yet Bottom's scheme of making "some man or other to present wall, with some plaster, or some loam, or some rough cast about him to signify wall," is practically and actually carried out in China—as, for example, when a beleaguered city is the scene of action, then men

are heaped upon one another, and form "the wall" which is to be scaled or overthrown, and it is by mounting and tumbling over these bodies that the attacking and victorious heroes make their way into the stronghold.*

The belief in witches, ghosts, good and evil spirits, is almost universal in China. The popular almanacks, which have an immense circulation, have many pages filled with pictorial representations and descriptions of strange creatures, "Gorgons, and hydras and chimeras dire," who frighten children and women; genii who bless or curse, with instructions as to the means of thwarting their mischievous, and conciliating their benevolent purposes. How to win the affections of another; to obtain sleep at night; to succeed in a commercial enterprise; to make a journey in safety; to prognosticate the weather; to win at a lottery; to secure the birth of male children; to reach a happy old age; such, and almost any other objects of desire, are to be obtained by the supernatural agencies which are introduced to the readers.

It is a general superstition in China that multitudes of hungry demons in various hideous forms are constantly wandering over the earth, being the souls of wicked men, who can find neither rest nor domicile; and the superstition affords abundant elements with which to move the popular mind. Spectral appearances and monsters of all sorts form, naturally enough, a considerable part of the theatrical machinery. They are, in fact, associated with all the business of life. At the entrance of every public office, of every temple, there are images of fierce dragons, and fanciful beasts and reptiles, intended to inspire the passers-by with awe and terror. On the floor of the stage there is a trap-door, through which ghosts and spirits mount to take their part in the proceedings, but they usually announce their coming by unspiritual vociferations, and ask for help from above to be pulled up by the shoulders, or to be pushed up by aid from below. As there is no delay over the shifting of scenes or the falling of curtains, the story pursues its uninterrupted course.

Examples throwing light on other characteristics of the Chinese drama will form the commencement of another paper.

A FIGHT WITH FEVER.

WHEN, three years and a half ago, we told the story of the London Fever Hospital,† the season was healthy, and the great value of its shelter and care, even in sickly times, was less understood than it now is. Then there were not more than about thirty patients in its wards. Within less than a year from that time a severe epidemic raised the thirty to one hundred and seventy, and we told then how, at peril of their own lives, the officers and nurses of the hospital were engaged in mortal struggle with a

* See Barrow's Travels in China, p. 220. Williams's Middle Kingdom, ii. 86.

† See Growth of a Hospital, vol. v., page 475.

disease that smites the poor and ignorant for neglects of the rich, who should be also the wise. But it punishes the rich too, when, from the overcrowded and unclean homes of ill-fed sufferers, Pestilence stalks, clothed in his own purple of the poisoned life-blood of man, into the homes of those who wear fine linen and fare sumptuously every day. The uninvited guest so comes to them, when they sit, it may be, at the Christmas feast, and lays a yellow hand upon the child who is the hope of a happy house, turning its delightful prattle into hard and eager ravings of delirium, drawing the rough black line upon the rosy lips, putting the stare of anxious pain into the eye that was brimful of laughter, and the twitch of bony little fingers in place of the plump caressing hand. Ah! the grief of the poor mother who has few of this world's joys, whose Christmas, at the merriest, is but a hungry one, when her heart also is set hungering and aching for the life of her child down with the fever. The wail of the children and the silent care of the man when it is the mother who lies talking wildly on the bed of pain! But if the breadwinner himself is down with fever, and has nothing to give but infection of the terrible disease, how great is the poor household's need of a protecting care? At the present happy holiday-time at which we write, there are two hundred and thirty patients in the London Fever Hospital. Some convalescent are about to return to the homes that, for their absence, have drooped more than ever into want and suffering. Some in their wild delirium know neither where they are nor what they suffer. But, well cared for and well fed, well supplied with brandy and wine, there is hope for most of them. It used to be said, "feed a cold and starve a fever." They will tell you differently about fever at the Fever Hospital.

There are very, very few forms of disease in which the question how to feed is not of more positive importance than the question how to physic. All cures are by the healthy operation of the natural forces marvellously devised by almighty wisdom for the sustenance of the body. Our food is the raw material they work with. Let them have a sufficient quantity of that, and they may be trusted to work marvels. Deprive them of that, in the belief that drugs are a sufficient substitute, and you are making the spade that digs their grave. Whatever the disease, the patient must be fed; and that, too, with more natural victual than can be supplied out of an apothecary's shop. To know how in each case to supply the always indispensable food in the most suitable and nutritive form, is the best half of the sound practice of physic. The administering of medicine is in many diseases quite unnecessary, though in some most valuable, and is a supplementary duty only well fulfilled by the practitioner who understands clearly that every grain or drop of a drug that is not wanted, is only so much hindrance to swift and complete recovery. The patients in the Fever Hospital, the greater

number of them suffering from the typhus or typhoid fever that want breeds, need above all things nourishing and stimulating food, and this they get.

But whence? The institution is wholly without endowment. Its support by subscriptions is hardly sufficient to keep it ready for its work in healthy seasons; when, therefore, the time of epidemic comes, the need is great for special help from a new body of supporters. During the past year the good service demanded of the hospital, and done by it, has been of unexampled magnitude. In the years eighteen hundred and sixty and sixty-one, the number of patients received into the London Fever Hospital were three hundred and ninety-one, and six hundred and forty-six. In the next following year the number admitted was two thousand six hundred and ninety-nine, the greatest number received in any year until that year 'sixty-four, which has now passed from us; the number of fever cases taken charge of in that last year having reached three thousand five hundred. On one day last September as many as twenty-seven fresh cases were taken in. That was an unexampled number, but often there are received at many as twenty in a day, and they are apt to come in a rush during about four hours of the afternoon and evening, when one patient is not in bed before another arrives at the door.

It is just a year since the committee of the hospital, having found its two hundred beds all insufficient for the public need, added, and opened for the reception of patients, a new wing, to contain sixty additional beds. This was opened in a season of increasing epidemic, just in time to prevent many fever cases from being sent back to be centres of infection in the overcrowded courts and alleys from which they are chiefly brought. During all the past year not a single case was turned back from the hospital doors for want of room, and the number cared for has been greater by nearly a thousand than in any former year.

How many lives outside are saved by the withdrawal of so many centres of infection from the hotbeds of London disease, it is impossible to calculate. It has been shown that their reception in the Fever Hospital involves a less amount of risk to the lives of medical men, nurses, students, or other patients, than their distribution into fever wards of the general hospitals. But all the diffused risk that, being saved to the community, lessens the general sacrifice of life, is concentrated among the medical officers and nurses of the Fever Hospital. The lesser and special is substituted for the greater and general risk, but that special risk is real, and known; and it is met deliberately, as a soldier meets the risk of battle, by all who are engaged at this hospital in disputing his prey with the gaunt typhus fiend.

The present resident medical officer was appointed in the summer of the year 'sixty-three. In September of that year, typhus redoubling strength, multiplied victims, and the labour of the contest became incessant, at a holiday-time

when, owing to the medical recess, it was difficult to get additional assistance. Short hours of rest and constant work under confinement in the fever wards, caused the medical officer himself to be laid on his back with fever, by the time help could be got. Then, the recess being over, it was not difficult to find a young soldier in the war against a dread disease, willing to meet the certainty of a wound, and the chance of its being a fatal one, in the cause of humanity. An assistant was given to him. Before the resident officer, whose place was then for a time supplied, had recovered from the attack by which he had been prostrated, his substitute was already down, and when the first resident officer was ready to return to the fight, the assistant was down too. A substitute who took that gentleman's place, was in three weeks a dead man, and the assistant himself got up only to be again knocked down by the disease. He has at last been forced to retire, crippled for a time only, we trust, by the enemy. His place was filled immediately by another fearless volunteer. Surely there are no men-at-arms who fight more truly and heroically the battles of their country than the hard-pressed medical officers of a place like this, who, when nine-tenths of the London world have been three or four hours a-bed, pass through the prostrate ranks of the fever-smitten, before retiring to the short and often broken rest that must refresh them for another day of battle with the grim destroyer. The bright moonlight, perhaps, that floods in through the ample windows, overpowers the night glimmer of gaslight in the spacious wards, and lies pale and quiet among ghostly shadows of its own making upon the floor, and upon the beds whence rise inarticulate mutterings of the fevered sleeper, or delirious cries of the wakeful, street cries, perhaps, from the sick costermonger, who supposes himself to be abroad earning his children's bread, or the plaintive child cry after "Mother," from little lips whose speech will never again upon earth make their fond music for a mother's ears. Or from the open space about the hospital the whole force of the night gale is to be heard and felt as it sweeps round the building with a clatter and a moan, to which the voices of delirium within blend themselves strangely, and the weird feeling that oppresses the weary soldier of humanity as he labours at such times upon his battle-field, is relieved only by the tranquil and homely figures of the nurses, who continually move about with jugs of beef-tea, egg-flip, and other needful supports of the sick against the wasting power of their enemy.

These nurses, too, risk life in the performance of a necessary and a noble duty. During the last year sixteen of them were struck down by typhus. Three of the sixteen died, most of the others are at their good work again, and form part of the seasoned staff of nurses, who are, so to speak, acclimatised to the conditions under which they work. Deplorable as is the loss of any one of them, it is to be borne in mind that this mortality among nurses at the Fever Hospital is very low in proportion to that which

happened during the same year at the few general hospitals which admit a limited number of fever cases into their wards.

To give their nurses the best chance of health, the Fever Hospital Committee has resolved to build for them fresh dormitories, so that upwards of six hundred cubic feet may be allowed to each occupant of a well-ventilated room. Here is a new work on the point of commencement, a new need of public help for those who are sheltering and tending the fevered poor of London, and not protecting the poor only, but all classes of society.

During the last year two hundred and thirty domestic servants, sixty shopmen and warehousemen, and three governesses, were received into the Fever Hospital out of the houses of their employers. Speedy removal to a place exactly fitted to their reception was an act of humanity that served a selfish purpose, by saving the family of many a wealthy private person from the danger of infection. A small admission fee of two guineas—be the case a long one or a short one—is all that is asked of non-subscribers when they send to the Fever Hospital servants or dependents who alarm their families with fever in the house. As for the poor, they have learnt to desire nothing better than admission to this hospital if fever seizes them. When thoroughly washed, put into a clean bed in one of its spacious wards, and sustained by the first taste of more suitable and nutritious food than they could get at home, a sigh of relief in those who retain enough of consciousness to know what is done about them, has a thousand times accompanied some such phrase as, "I don't know what would become of us poor if it were not for such a place as this!"

Many a widow's mite, many a heart's gratitude, speaks from the heap of grimy coppers and small silver coins that is, from time to time, taken out of the donation boxes placed in the corridors of the wards. If the rich were as generous to it as the poor, there would be no hospital in London so nobly endowed as this, which has absolutely no endowment whatever. Yet the admissions to it exceed those into any other hospital, except Guy's, Saint Bartholomew's, Saint Thomas's, and the London, all of them endowed magnificently by our forefathers.

IN THE RING.

It was a most difficult position. An invasion *vi et armis*, by six charming English girls, upon the house of an elderly Scotch doctor, of small practice, slowly diminishing, in an out-of-the-way uninteresting town, whose few inhabitants live upon anything and do nothing. Yet, such was my fortune, I, Adam Black, commonly called Uncle Adam, probably for the excellent reason of my being uncle to nobody, and therefore to everybody, including these charming girls who had now made a raid upon me. So happy, laughing, loving, were they; full of admiration

of all they saw—Uncle Adam's house and garden, Uncle Adam's pony-chaise, and, they were pleased to say, Uncle Adam's agreeable society, that I should have been more than man if my heart had not speedily found itself riddled through and through.

"And now, uncle, since we mean to stay till to-morrow, how do you mean to amuse us?"

Of course, I would have done anything in reason, have given them a tea drinking; but that would have driven my housekeeper crazy; or a pic-nic, but ours is the identical part of the country when the traveller asking "Does it always rain?" was answered "Na, na,—whiles it snaws." Or I would have invited half a dozen young men for them to flirt with—but there never are any young men in our town—besides, I dislike flirtation. I like a man or woman to fall honestly in love and stick to it, quite ready either to marry or to die, as might be most expedient. But people neither marry for love, nor die for it, now-a-days. Which is rather a falling off, I opine.

But to the point. I could not allow my visitors to waste their sweetness on my desert air, and gay and pleasant as they always were, I fancied towards nightfall they began to weary.

"I'll tell you what, girls," said I, driven to sudden desperation by the youngest's proposing Readings from Young's Night Thoughts, and Pollok's Course of Time, by way of passing the evening, "I'll take you to the circus."

I saw a slight smile flit over three of the six pretty—well, the six nice-looking faces—for pleasant women always look nice to me. Certainly it was a long way to come from London to go to a circus in a small country town in Scotland.

But I assured them it was a most talented company, which had been in the town three months, and the troupe were highly respectable people (indeed, I had attended one of them professionally, but I did not think it necessary to state this). Moreover, I had been there myself, with a small patient who wanted a treat, and had enjoyed the evening as much as the child did. In short, as I told them, if my "nieces," though such stylish young ladies, would only condescend to make themselves children for the nonce, to take pleasure in innocent childish folly (there was a most capital "fool," by-the-by), I would answer for it they would be exceedingly well amused.

So they put on hats and shawls—no need of white gloves and opera cloaks here—and off we sallied, through the cool bright autumn evening, to the quiet street where the circus was, a large wooden, temporary building. I had passed it often on my walks into town, but took little notice of it, and no interest in it; according to the commonly received fact, that one half the world neither knows nor cares how the other half lives—till my accidental visit lately.

Since then I had often paused to listen in passing to the sounds within, the band playing,

and the horses galloping; to wonder if that bonnie bit girlie were still bounding through the flower-enwreathed hoops, and that agile boy turning somersaults after her, both on their "fiery steeds." Above all, what sort of thing was that "Wondrous performance of Signor Uberto on the Flying Trapeze," which had been announced night after night as the climax of attraction.

Poor Signor Uberto! it was him whom I had been doctoring; he had had a sore hand, which incapacitated him from professional duty. He seemed a very quiet respectable young fellow, and his name was John Stone. Of course I did not think it necessary to tell all this to my satirical young ladies; besides, a doctor's confidence should be always sacred, be his patient a circus performer or a king.

We produced quite a sensation when we entered; such a large and distinguished party, who monopolised the reserved seats, and represented seven half-crowns of honest British money. On the strength of which, I suppose, we received seven distinct bows from the gentleman who took it, a very fierce, be-whiskered, hippo-dramatic individual indeed. I knew him, though I hoped he did not recognise me. He was the Herr von Stein, proprietor and manager of the troupe, and Signor Uberto's father. It had been privately confided to me that "old Stone," as he was called in private life, was as hard as a flint, and he looked it. He grasped the half-crowns as if they were pound-notes, or twenty-pound notes, and crammed them into his pocket immediately.

The performances had already begun. From boxes and gallery were stretched out a mass of those honest eager faces which always make a minor theatre, or an accidental dramatic entertainment in the provinces, so very amusing. At least to me, who have seen so much of the dark side of life, that I like to see people happy, even for an hour, in any innocent way. There is a strong feeling in Scotland against "play-acting," but apparently the prejudice did not extend to quadrupedal performances, for I noticed a large gathering of the working and trading class in our town, with their wives and families. All were intently watching the careering round and round that magic "ring" of two beautiful horses, ridden by a boy and girl in the character of the "Highland Laddie and Lassie."

Ridden did I say? It was more like floating, flying, dancing—in and out, up and down—twirling and attitudinising in one another's arms—changing horses—galloping wildly, both on one horse. The boy was slim and graceful—the girl—why, she was a perfect little fairy, with her white frock, her tartan scarf, and the hood tying back her showers of light curly hair, that tossed, and whirled, and swirled, in all directions. Whether she stood, knelt, balanced herself on one leg, or wreathed herself about, in the supple way that these gymnasts do, she was equally picturesque. Not over-like an Highland lassie, such as

one sees digging potatoes in Perthshire, but still a most fascinating something else. The little creature seemed to enjoy it so herself; smiled, not with the dancer's stereotyped grin, but a broad honest childish smile, as she leaped down, made her final curtsy, and bounded along through the exit under the boxes.

There—among the group which seemed always hanging about there—the ring-master, the clown, and one or two young men—there crept forward a figure in black, a young woman, who met the Highland fairy, threw a shawl over her, and carried her off; a performance not set down in the bills, but which seemed to entertain the audience exceedingly.

The next diversion was a "Feat on Bottles, by Monsieur Ariel," who shall here go down to posterity as a proof of the many ingenious ways in which a man can earn a livelihood if he chooses. Two dozen empty bottles—ordinary "Dublin Stout"—are arranged in a double line across a wooden table. Enter a little fat man, in tights, and an eccentric cap, who bows, springs upon the table, and with a solemn and anxious countenance proceeds to step, clinging with his two feet, on to the shoulders of two of the bottles. This is Monsieur Ariel. He walks from bottle to bottle, displacing none, and never once missing his footing, till he reaches the end of the double line, then slowly turns, still balancing himself with the utmost care, as is necessary, and walks back again amidst thunders of applause. He then, after pausing, and wiping his anxious brows, proceeds to several other feats, the last of which consists in forming the bottles into a pyramid, setting a chair on top of them, where he sits, stands, and finally poises himself on his head for a second, to the breathless delight of all observers, turns a somersault, bows, and exit Monsieur Ariel. He has earned his nightly wage, and a tolerably hard-earned wage it is, to judge by his worn countenance.

But I cannot specify each of the performances, though, I confess, after-events photographed them all sharply on my mind. So that I still can see the "Dashing Act on a Bare-backed Horse," which was a series of leaps, backwards and forwards, turning and twisting, riding the beast in every sort of fashion, and on every part of him, except his ears and his tail; indeed, I think the equestrian gymnast was actually swept round the ring once or twice, clinging with arms and legs to the creature's neck. And the "Comic Performing Mules!" how delicious they were in their obstinacy! Perfectly tame and quiet, till one of the audience, by invitation, attempted to get on their backs, when, by some clever evolution, they gently slipped him over their noses, and left him biting the ignominious sawdust. One only succeeded—a youth in a groom's dress—who, after many failures, rode the mules round the ring; on which there was great triumph in the gallery, which felt that "our side" had won. For me—I doubt—since do I not in the next scene, the "Grand Hippodramatic Spectacle,

entitled Dick Turpin's Ride to York," behold that identical youth, red-headed and long-nosed, attired, not as a groom of the sixteenth century, but as a highwayman of the seventeenth, and managing a beautiful bay horse, at least as cleverly as he did the Performing Mule?

This Ride to York—my nieces remember it still—and declare that Robson—alas, poor Robson!—could not have acted *Dick Turpin* better. And for Black Bess, her acting was beautiful, or rather it was not acting, but obeying. The way the mare followed her master about, leaped the turnpike at Hornsey, crawled into the ring again—supposed near York—with her flanks all flecked with foam (and white chalk), drank the pail of brandy and water, and ate the raw beefsteak, was quite touching. When, at last, she sank down, in a wonderful simulation of dying, and poor *Dick*, in a despairing effort to rouse her, struck her with the whip—my eldest niece winced, and muttered involuntarily, "Oh, how cruel!"—And when, after a futile struggle to obey and rise, poor Black Bess turned, licked Turpin's coat-sleeve, and dropped with her head back, prone, stiff, and dead—most admirably dead—my youngest niece, a tender-hearted lassie, freely acknowledges that—she cried!

The last entertainment of the evening was the Flying Trapeze.

Not everybody knows what a trapeze is; a series of handles, made of short poles suspended at either end by elastic ropes, and fastened to the roof, at regular intervals, all across the stage. These handles are swung to and fro by the performer or his assistant; and the feat is to catch each one, swing backwards and forwards with it, and then to spring on to the next one, producing to the eyes of the audience, for a brief second or two, exactly the appearance of flying. Of course the great difficulty lies in choosing the precise moment for the spring, and calculating accurately your grasp of the next handle, since, if you missed it—

"Ah," said my eldest niece, with a slight shudder, "now I see the meaning of those mattresses, which they are laying so carefully under the whole line of the trapeze. And I understand why that man, who walks about giving directions, is so very particular in seeing that the handles are fastened securely. He looks anxious too, I fancy."

"Well he may. He is Signor Uberto's father."

"Then, is it anything very dangerous, or frightful? Perhaps we had better go?"

But it was too late, or we fancied it was. Besides, for myself, I did not wish to leave. That strange excitement which impels us often to stop and see the end of a thing, dreadful though it may be, or else some feeling for which I was utterly unable to account, kept me firm in my place. For just then, entering quickly by the usual door, appeared a small slight young man, who looked a mere boy indeed, and in his white tight-fitting dress, that showed every muscle of

an exceedingly delicate and graceful frame, was a model for a sculptor. He had long light hair, tied back with a ribbon, after the fashion of acrobats, and thin pale features, very firm and still. This was the Signor Uberto, who was going once more to risk his life—as every trapeze performer must risk it—for our night's amusement.

He stood, while his father carefully tried the fastenings of each handle, and examined the platform on which were laid the mattresses. But the youth himself did not look at anything. Perhaps he was so used to it that the performance seemed safe and natural—perhaps he felt it was useless to think whether it were so or not, since he must perform. Or, possibly, he took all easily, and did not think of anything.

But I could not help putting myself into the place of the young man, and wondering whether he really did recognise any danger, more especially as I saw, lurking and watching in the exit corner, somebody belonging to him—the young woman in black, who was his sister, I concluded, since when I visited him she had brought lint and rags and helped me to tie up his sore hand. Over this hand his father was exceedingly anxious, because every day's loss of performance was a loss to the treasury. This was the first day of the signor's reappearance, and the circus was full to the roof.

Popularity is seldom without a reason, and I do not deny that the flying trapeze is a very curious and even beautiful sight. In this case the extreme grace of the performer added to its charm. He mounted, agile as a deer, the high platform at the end of the circus, and swung himself off by the elastic ropes, clinging only with his hands, his feet extended, like one of the floating figures in pictures of saints or fairies. His father, standing opposite, and watching intently his time—for a second might prove either too late or too soon—threw the other trapeze forward to meet him. The young man dropped lightly into it, hanging a moment in air between whiles, apparently as easily as if he had been born to fly, then gave himself another swing, and alighted safely at the far end of the platform.

This feat he accomplished twice, thrice, four times, each time with some slight variation, and more gracefully than the last, followed by a low murmur of applause—the people were too breathless to shout. The fifth time, when one had grown so familiar with the performance that one had almost ceased to shudder, and began to regard the performer not as a human creature at all, with flesh and blood and bones, but as some painted puppet, or phantasmal representation on a wall—the fifth time he missed his grasp of the second trapeze, and fell.

It was so sudden;—one moment the sight of that flying figure—the next, a crash on the mattress platform, on its edge, from which rolled off a helpless something, falling with a heavy thud on the sawdust floor below.

I heard a scream—it might be from one of my

girls, but I could not heed them. Before I well knew where I was, I found myself with the young man's head on my knee, trying to keep off the crowd that pressed round.

"Is he dead?"

"Na, na—he's no deid. Give him some whisky.

He's coming to, pair laddie."

But he did not "come to," not for hours, until I had had him taken to the nearest available place—which happened to be my own house, for his lodgings were at the other end of the town.

All the long night that I sat by the poor young man's bedside, I felt somehow as if I had murdered him, or helped to do it. For had I not "followed the multitude to do evil," added my seven half-crowns to tempt him, or rather the skin-flint father who was making money by him, to risk his life for our amusement? True, he would have done it all the same had I not been there; but still I was there. I and my young ladies had swelled the number which had lured him on to his destruction, and I felt very guilty. What they felt, poor dears, I do not know; it was quite impossible for me to take any heed of them. My whole attention was engrossed by the case. I wonder if people suppose us surgeons hardened because we get into the habit of speaking of our fellow-creatures merely as "a case."

No one hindered my doing what I would with my patient, so I had him removed to my own room—the spare rooms being occupied—examined him, and set a simple fracture of the arm, which was the only visible injury. Then I sat and watched him, as conscience-stricken as if I had been one of the old Roman emperors at a gladiator show, or a modern Spanish lady at a bull-fight, or a fast young English nobleman hiring rooms at the Old Bailey in order to witness a judicial murder. For had I not sat calmly by, a spectator of what was neither more nor less than murder? Somebody behind me seemed to guess at my thought.

"If he had died, doctor, I should always have said he had been murdered."

There was an intensity in the voice which quite startled me, for she had kept so quietly in the background that I had scarcely noticed her till now—the young woman in black. She was not a pretty young woman—perhaps not young at all—being so deeply pitted with small-pox that her age became doubtful to guess at; but she had kind soft eyes, an intelligent forehead, and an excessively sweet English voice.

If there is one thing more than another by which I judge a woman, it is her voice; not her set "company" voice, but the tone she speaks in ordinarily or accidentally. *That* never deceives. Looks may. I have known fair-faced blue-eyed angels, and girls with features as soft and lovely as houris, who could talk in most dulcet fashion till something crossed them, and then out came the hard metallic ring, which always indicates that curse of womanhood—worst of all faults except untruthfulness—*temper*. And I have heard voices, belonging to the plainest of faces, which

were deep and soft, and low like a thrush's in an April garden. I would rather marry the woman that owned such a voice than the prettiest woman in the world.

This young woman had one, and I liked her instantaneously.

"Who are you, my dear?" I whispered. "His sister?"

"He has none—nor brother either."

"His cousin, then?"

"No."

I looked my next question, and she answered it with the simple honesty I expected from the owner of that voice.

"John and I were playfellows; then we kept company five years, and meant to be married next month. His father was against it, or it would have been sooner. But Johnny wished to stop trapezeing and settle in some other line; and Old Stone wanted money, and wouldn't let him go. At last they agreed for six more performances, and this was the first of the six."

"He'll never perform more," said I, involuntarily.

"No, he couldn't with that arm. I am very thankful for it," said she, with a touching desperate clutch at the brightest side of things.

How could I tell her what I begun every hour more to dread, that the broken arm was the least injury which had befallen the young man; that I feared one of those concussions to the spine, which are often produced by a fall from a height, or a railway injury, and which, without any external wound, cripples the sufferer for years or for life.

"No, he never shall do anything o' that sort again," continued she. "Father or no father, I'll not have him murdered." And there came a hard fierceness into her eyes, like that of a creature who has long been hunted down, and at last suddenly turns at bay.

"Where is his father? he has not come near him."

"Of course not. He's a precious coward is Old Stone, and as sharp as a needle after money, or at keeping away when money's likely to be wanted. But don't be afraid. I've myself got enough to pay you, sir. That's all the better. He is *my* Johnny now."

This was the most of our conversation, carried on at intervals, and in whispers, during the night. My fellow-watcher sat behind the curtain, scarcely moving, except to do some feminine office, such as building up the fire noiselessly, coal by coal, as nurses know how, handing me anything I required of food or medicine. Or else she sat motionless with her eyes fixed on the death-white face; but she never shed a tear. Not till, in the dawn of morning, the young man woke up in his right senses, and spoke feebly, but articulately.

"Doctor, thank you. I knew you, and I know what's happened. Only, just one word. I want Dorothy. Please fetch Dorothy."

"Yes, Johnny," spoken quite softly and composedly. "Yes, Johnny. I'm here."

It was a difficult case. The first-rate Edinburgh surgeon, whom, doubting my own skill, I fetched next day, could make nothing of it. There were no injuries, external or internal, that could be traced, except the broken arm; the young man lay complaining of nothing, perfectly conscious and rational, but his lower limbs apparently paralysed.

We called in a third doctor; he, too, was puzzled; but he said he had known one such case, where, after a railway accident, a man had been brought home apparently uninjured, but having received some severe nervous shock, probably to the spine. He had been laid upon his bed, and there he lay yet, though it was years ago; suffering little, and with all his faculties clear, but totally helpless; obliged to be watched over and waited upon like an infant, by his old wife.

"For he was an old man, and he had a wife, which was lucky for him," added Doctor A. "It's rather harder for that poor young fellow, who may have to lie as he does now for the rest of his days."

"Hush!" I said, for he was talking loud in the passage, and close behind us stood poor Dorothy. I hoped she had not heard, but the first sight of her face convinced me she had; only women have at times a self-control that is almost awful.

Whether it was that I was afraid to meet her, I do not know, but I stepped quickly out of the house, and walked a mile or more to the railway station with my two friends. When I returned, the first thing I saw was Dorothy, waiting on the stair-head, with my housekeeper beside her. For, I should observe, that good woman did not object nearly so much to a poor dying lad as to an evening party, and had taken quite kindly to Dorothy.

Yes, she had heard it all, poor girl, and I could not attempt to deceive her; indeed, I felt by instinct that she was a person who could not be deceived; to whom it was best to tell the whole truth; satisfied that she would bear it well. She did, wonderfully. Of course I tempered it with the faint consolation, that doctors are sometimes mistaken, and that the young man had youth on his side; but there the truth was, blank and bare, nor did I pretend to hide it.

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. Thank you for telling me all. My poor Johnny!"

I took her into the parlour, and gave her a glass of wine.

"I don't need it, sir; I'm used to sick-nursing. I nursed my sister till she died. We were dress-makers, and then Johnny got me as costume-maker to the circus. I can earn a good deal by my needle, sir."

This seemed far away from the point, and so did her next remark.

"His father won't help him, sir, you'll see, not a halfpenny. He's got another—wife he calls her, and a lot of other children, and doesn't care twopence for Johnny."

"Poor fellow!"

"He isn't a poor fellow," she answered, sharply, "he's a very clever fellow; can read, and write, and keep accounts; he was thinking of trying for a clerk's situation. With that, and my dressmaking, we should have done very well, if we had once been married."

I hardly knew what to answer. I felt so exceedingly sorry for the poor girl, and yet she did not seem to feel her affliction. There was a strange light in her eyes, and a glow on her poor plain face, very unlike one whose whole hopes in life had just been suddenly blasted.

"Doctor," the voice went to my heart despite its bad grammar, and horrible English pronunciation, dropped h's and all, "may I speak to you, for I've nobody else, not a soul belonging to me, but Johnny. Will you let him stop here for a week or two?"

"A month, if necessary."

"Thank you. He shall be no trouble to you. I'll take care of that. Only, there's one thing to be done first. Doctor, I must marry Johnny."

She said it in such a matter-of-fact tone, that at first I doubted if I had rightly heard.

"Marry him? Good Heavens. You don't mean——"

"Yes I do, sir. Just that."

"Why, he will never be able to do a hand's turn of work for you—may never rise from his bed; will have to be tended like an infant for months, and may die after all."

"No matter, sir. He'd rather die with me than with anybody. Johnny loves me. I'll marry him."

There was a quiet determination about the woman which put all argument aside. And, Heaven forgive me! if it needs to be forgiven, I tried none. I am an old-fashioned fellow, who never was so happy as to have any woman loving me; but I have known enough of women to feel surprised at nothing they do, of this sort. Besides, I thought, and think still, that Dorothy was right, and that she did no more than was perfectly natural under the circumstances.

"And now, sir, how is it to be managed?"

Of course the sooner it was managed the better, and I found, on talking with her, that she had already arranged it all in her own mind. She had lived long enough in Scotland to be aware that a Scotch irregular marriage was easy enough; simply by the parties declaring themselves husband and wife before witnesses; but still her English feelings and habits clung to a marriage "by a proper clergyman." She was considerably relieved when I explained to her that if she put in the banns that Friday night—they might be "cried" on Sunday in the parish kirk, and married by my friend the minister, to whom I would explain the matter, on Monday morning.

"That will do," she said. "And now I must go up-stairs and speak to Johnny."

What she said to him, or how he received it, is impossible for me to relate. They told me nothing, and I did not inquire. It was not my business; indeed, it was nobody's business but their own.

Now, though I may be a very foolish old fellow, romantic, with the deep-seated desperate romance which, my eldest niece avers, underlies the hard and frigid Scotch character (I suspect she has her own reasons for studying it so deeply), still, I am not such a fool as I appear. Though I did take these young people into my house, and was quite prepared to assist at their marriage, considering it the best thing possible for both under the circumstances, still I was not going to let them be married without having fully investigated their antecedents.

I went to the circus, and there tried vainly to discover the Herr von Stein, whose black-bearded head I was sure I saw slipping away out of the ring, where the "Highland Lassie," in a dirty cotton frock, and a dirtier face, was careering round and round on her beautiful horse, while in the centre, on the identical table of the night before—what an age it seemed ago!—a little fat man in shirt-sleeves and stocking soles was walking solitarily and solemnly upon bottles.

From him—Monsieur Ariel, who had been inquiring more than once at my house to-day, leaving his name as "Mr. Higgins"—I gained full confirmation of Dorothy Hall's story. She and John Stone were alike respectable and well-conducted young people, and evidently great favourites in the establishment. Then, and afterwards, I also learnt a few other facts, which people are slow to believe everywhere, especially in Scotland, namely, that it is quite possible for "play-actors," and even circus performers, to be very honest and decent folk; and then, in fact, it does not do to judge of anybody by his calling, but solely by himself and his actions.

I hope, therefore, that I am passing no uncharitable judgment on the Herr von Stein, if I simply relate what occurred between us, without making any comment on his actions.

Finding he could not escape me, and that I sent message after message to him, he at last returned into the ring, and there—while the horses still went prancing round, the little girl continued her leaping, and we caught the occasional click-click of Monsieur Ariel practising among his bottles—the father stood and heard what I had to tell him concerning his son.

He was a father, and he seemed a good deal shocked, for about three minutes. Then he revived.

"It's very unfortunate, doctor; especially so for me, with my large family. What am I to do with him? What?" becoming more energetic, "what the devil am I to do with him?"

And—perhaps it was human nature, paternal nature, in its lowest form, as you may often see it in the police columns of the Times newspaper—when I told him that the only thing he had to do was to give his consent to his son's marriage with Dorothy Hall, he appeared first greatly astonished, and then as greatly relieved.

"My consent? Certainly. They're both five-and-twenty—old enough to know their own minds—and have been courting ever so long. She's an excellent young woman; can earn a good in-

come too. Yes, sir. Give them my cordial consent, and, in case it may be useful to them—this."

He fumbled in his pocket, took out an old purse, and counted out into my hand, with an air of great magnificence, five dirty pound notes. Which was all that I or anybody else ever saw of the money of the Herr von Stein.

When I gave them, with his message, to Dorothy, she crumpled them up in her fingers, with a curious sort of smile, but she never spoke one word.

Uncle Adam has been at many a marriage, showy and quiet, gay and grave, hearty and heartless, but he is ready to declare, solemnly, that he never saw one which touched him so much as that brief ceremony, which took place at the bedside of John Stone, the trapeze performer. It did not occupy more than ten minutes, for in the bridegroom's sad condition the slightest agitation was to be avoided. My housekeeper and myself were the only witnesses, and the whole proceeding was made as matter-of-fact as possible.

The bride's wedding dress was the shabby old black gown, which she had never taken off for three days and nights, during which she, my housekeeper, and I, had shared incessant watch together; her face was very worn and weary, but her eyes were bright, and her voice steady. She never faltered once till the few words which make a Scotch marriage were ended, and the minister—himself not unmoved—had shaken hands with her and wished her every happiness.

"Is it all done?" said she, half bewildered.

"Ay, lassie," answered my old housekeeper, "ye're married, sure enough."

Dorothy knelt down, put her arms round Johnny's neck, and laid her head beside him on the pillow, sobbing a little, but softly even now.

"Oh my dear, my dear! nothing can ever part us more."

The wonderful circus of Herr von Stein has left our town a long time ago. It took its departure, indeed, very soon after the dreadful trapeze accident, which of course got into all the local papers, and was discussed pretty sharply all over the country. Nay, the unfortunate Signor Uberto, alias John Stone, had the honour of being made the subject of a Times leader, and there was more than one letter in that paper suggesting a subscription for his benefit. But it came out somehow that his father was a circus proprietor of considerable means, and so the subscription languished, never reaching beyond thirty odd pounds, with which benevolence the public was satisfied.

I believe John Stone was satisfied too, that is, if he ever heard of it, which is doubtful; for during the earlier weeks and months of his illness his wife took care to keep everything painful from him; and so did I, so long as they

remained under my roof. This was a good deal longer than was at first intended, for my housekeeper became so attached to Mrs. John Stone, that she could not bear to let them go. And the poor fellow himself was, as Dorothy had promised, "no trouble," almost a pleasure in the house, from his patience, sweetness, and intelligence.

When they left me, they went to a small lodging hard by, where the wife set up dressmaking, and soon got as much work as ever she could do, among my patients, and the townspeople generally. For some enthusiastic persons took an interest in her, and called her "a heroine;" though, I confess, I myself always objected to this, and never could see that she had done any more than what was the most right and natural thing for a woman to do, supposing women were as they used to be in my young days, or as I used to think them.

But, heroine or not, Dorothy prospered. And in process of time her love was rewarded even beyond her hopes. Her husband's mysterious affliction gradually amended. He began to use his feet, then his legs, and slowly recovered, in degree, the power of walking. Not that he ever became a robust man; the shock of his fall, acting on an exceedingly delicate and nervous frame, seemed to have affected all the springs of life; but he was no longer quite invalided and helpless, and by-and-by he began anxiously to seek for occupation. I hardly know which was the happiest, himself or Dorothy, when I succeeded in getting him employment as a writer's copying clerk, with as much work as filled up his time, and saved him from feeling, what he could not but feel—though I think he did not feel it very painfully, he loved her so—that his wife was the sole bread-winner.

When I go to see them now, in their cheery little home of two rooms, one devoted to dress-making, the other, half kitchen, half bedroom, in which John sits, and where Dorothy, with her usual habit of making the best of things, has accommodated Scotch ways to her English notions of comfort and tidiness—I say, when I go to see these two, so contented, and devoted to one another, I often think that among many fortunate people, I have seen far less happy couples than John and Dorothy.

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